1242

THE TANJORE MAHARAJA SERFOGI'S SARASWATI MAHAL.

MANNERS.

VOL. I.

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Sarfojee Rajah
1242

MANNERS:

A NOVEL.

—— Dicas hîc forsitan unde
Ingenium par materiæ. JUVENAL.

Je sais qu'un sot trouve toujours un plus sot pour
le lire. FRED. LE GRAND.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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MANNERS.

CHAPTER I.

What, and how great, the virtue and the art,
To live on little with a cheerful heart—
(A doctrine sage, but truly none of mine)
Let's talk, my friends, ——

POPE.

IN the retired village of Deane, in Yorkshire, lived for many years one of those unfortunate females ycleped an old maid; a title which generally exposes the possessor to every species of contempt, however inoffensive, or even worthy, the individual may be, thus unluckily designated.

Mrs. Martin, the lady alluded to, was certainly one of those more "sinned against than sinning;" for malice itself could not accuse her of one uncharitable thought, word, or action: and even her enemies, if enemies she had, must have acknowledged, that "Poor Mrs. Martin had a good heart," however inferior she might be in understanding to those, who affected to despise her unassuming merits. She was one of those worthy good people, who never did a wicked thing, and never said a wise one; and who, therefore, are seldom mentioned without some epithet of contemptuous pity by those, who at least wish to be considered of an entirely opposite character. She lived in a contented mediocrity, "aboon distress below envy," humble, and good natured, with a most happy temperament, both moral and physical; in friendship with all the world, and devoutly believing all the world in friendship with her, and indeed in that respect at least her judg-

ment did not err; for few people were more generally beloved than "Poor Mrs. Martin." She always had a ready laugh for the awkward jests of her neighbours, and to the distressed she as willingly gave her equally ready tear.—Her income was extremely limited, yet she still contrived to spare a mite to those still poorer than herself, and to her trifling donations she added such cordially interested enquiries, and such well intentioned advice, that her mercy was indeed "twice blest."—To her other good qualities she joined that of being a most excellent manager. All the village acknowledged, that "Poor Mrs. Martin's sweetmeats, and poor Mrs. Martin's bacon, were the best in the place;" nor were there many seasons so unproductive in her little garden, as to deprive her of the pride and pleasure of bestowing a bottle of currant wine, or a pot of raspberry jam, on her more opulent though less thrifty neighbour.—Her house, which

was in the middle of the village, was only distinguished from those around it by its superior neatness: a court, about the dimensions of a modern dinner table, which she facetiously termed her pleasure ground, divided it from the principal, indeed the only street, and was separated from it by a few white rails;—a little walk curiously paved in different coloured stones was the approach to the hall door, and the grass on each side was ornamented by a circular bed bordered with reversed oyster shells, and containing each a few rose trees. The house boasted of one window corresponding to each flower bed on the ground floor; and of three above stairs, the centre one of which, being Mrs. Martin's own bed room, was ornamented with an old fender painted green, which served as a balcony to support three flourishing geraniums, and a stock July flower, that "wasted its sweetness on the desert air" out of a broken tea pot, which had been

carefully treasured by this thrifty housewife as a substitute for a flower pot. The hall door, which always stood open in fine weather, was decorated with a clean but useless brass knocker, and a conspicuous rush mat; whilst the narrow passage, to which it led, presented, as its sole furniture, a huge clock, on which Mrs. Martin's only attendant Peggy often boasted no spider was ever known to rest, and whose gigantic case filled the whole space from wall to wall. The left hand window, whose dark brown shutters were carefully bolted back on the outside, illuminated a kitchen, where cheerful cleanliness amply compensated for want of size;—opposite to it was the only parlour, of the same proportions, and of equal neatness; a small Pembroke table, that, with change of furniture, served the purpose of dinner, breakfast, or card table; white dimity curtains, and a blind that was for any thing rather than use, as it was never closed; half a

dozen chairs, that once had exhibited resplendent ornaments of lilies and roses, painted in all the colours of the rainbow, but whose honours had long since faded under the powerful and unremitting exertions of Peggy's scrubbing brush; a corner cupboard, the top shelf of which with difficulty contained a well polished japanned tea tray, where a rosy Celadon, in a brilliant scarlet coat, sighed most romantically at the feet of Lavinia in a plume of feathers; and the best cups and saucers, ranged in regular order, filled the ranks below;—a book shelf, which, besides containing a Bible, Sir Charles Grandison, a few volumes of the Spectator, and occasionally a well thumbed novel from Mr. Salter's circulating library, was also the repository for various stray articles, such as the tea caddy, Mrs. Martin's knitting, and receipt book, transcribed by her niece Lucy; and lastly, a barbarous copy of Bunbury's beautiful print of Jenny Grey, the highly

prized, and only production of Lucy's needle, while attending Miss Slater's genteel "academy for young ladies," composed the furniture of this little room.

But its chief ornament, and Mrs. Martin's greatest pride (next to Lucy herself), was a glass door, that opened into her demesne: a plot of ground, containing about an acre and a half, which was kitchen garden, flower garden, and orchard, all in one. This glass door had been a present of young Mr. Mordaunt's, in whose company Mrs. Martin had often undesignedly lamented, that the sole entrance to her garden was through the scullery, and, on her return from her only visit to London, about two years before this narration commences, she had been most agreeably surprised by the improvement in question.—Various and manifold were the speculations, to which this little piece of good natured gallantry had given rise in the simple mind of Mrs.

Martin.—" Indeed, indeed, she never thought of his doing such a thing! so generous! so kind! and then his manner was always so obliging and polite; it could not certainly be for herself that he took the trouble of ordering the glass door; and she remembered very well, when he called after their return from London, that he said he was very glad to see a town life had agreed so well with Lucy, though Mrs. Crosbie had very good naturedly said, she thought she didn't look half so well as before she went. To be sure, she never saw him *talk* much to Lucy, but then she was so shy!"—Mrs. Martin had been standing for some minutes at this same glass door, one fine evening in July, indulging in a similar reverie, when it was suddenly interrupted by the abrupt entrance of Lucy, who, with as much concern in her countenance as her vacant unmeaning features could express, exclaimed—" La! Aunt, he won't come to-night after all!"—" Not

come, child!" answered Mrs. Martin, "why, I never expected he would."—"Not expect Mr. Brown?" returned Lucy, in a tone something between anger and surprise; "Not expect Mr. Brown? why I'm sure he'd come if he could, and you'd never ask the Lucases without him." "No, indeed, my dear, I would not;" replied Mrs. Martin, totally unconscious that her first answer had alluded to the subject of her own thoughts, not to the constant object of poor Lucy's—"He is a well behaved, sober young man, and very attentive to the shop; but why won't he come to night?"—"He just rode up as I was standing at the gate with this little bottle of rose water, which he brought then, because, he said, he had to go to squire Thornbull's to see the cook, and he didn't think he could be back for tea do what he would—I'm sure I wish Mr. Lucas would attend his own patients."—"Well, Lucy, I suppose the rest will soon be

here; do just set down the tray, my love, whilst I go and see if Peggy is doing the Sally Lunn right." Poor Lucy proceeded to her task with unwonted gloom, having first stopped to take one more smell of the rose water before she placed it on the ready book shelf; and so slow was she in her movements, that the tea table was scarcely arranged, when she heard her aunt accost her visitors out of the kitchen window, with "How dy'e do Mrs. Crosbie, how d'ye do Mrs. Lucas; beautiful evening; thank you kindly; I'm quite well, and Lucy's charming; pray step in Mr. Crosbie—give me your hat; Mr. Lucas, I'll hang your cane up by the clock here; sit down my dear Nanny, I hope your shoes are dry—indeed, I don't think they can be wet; we've scarcely had a drop of rain this fortnight.—Peggy! bring in the kettle."

And now, what with the disposal of the bonnets, the arrangement of the

chairs, and the repetition of observations on the weather, and inquiries after the health of each individual present, the time was fully occupied, till the arrival of Peggy, with a bright copper tea kettle in one hand, and a well buttered, smoaking hot Sally Lunn in the other, put an end to the confusion of tongues, and assembled the party in temporary silence round the tea table.—But Mrs. Martin's natural loquacity, added to her incessant desire to be civil, soon induced her to interrupt the momentary calm, and, while she spread her snow white pocket handkerchief on her knees, as a preparation for her attack on the Sally Lunn, she addressed her neighbour, the attorney, with—" Well, Mr. Crosbie, what did you think of our sermon last evening; it was a delightful one, was'nt it?"—" Yes, a very good, plain sermon, Mrs. Martin; but, with all deference to your better judgment, Mrs. Martin, I think your friend Mr. Temple doesn't show as

much learning in the pulpit as he might do."—"Learning!" quoth his amicable spouse, "I never can believe that man is a learned man; I could make as good a sermon myself."—"*Non constat*, my love," replied Mr. Crosbie; "though I often think you would have done very well for a parson, you are so fond of always having the last word." Probably the gentle Mrs. Crosbie would have given the company a specimen of her talents for lecturing, had she not acquired a habit of never attending to what her husband said: she had therefore, fortunately, no doubt, during his speech, profited by the opportunity of overhearing Mrs. Martin's and Mrs. Lucas's discussion, respecting the appearance at church the evening before of the party from Webberly House, consisting of Mrs. Sullivan and her two elder daughters, the Miss Webberlys.—"I declare, I wasn't sure they were come down yet," said Mrs. Martin, "till I saw their two

great footmen bring their prayer books into church, and their cushions; Mrs. Sullivan looks quite plump and well."—"Yes, indeed, she looks remarkably well;" answered the assenting Mrs. Lucas.—"Well!" retorted Mrs. Crosbie—"I think she is going into a dropsy; her face is for all the world like a Cheshire cheese."—"It certainly does look as if it was a little swelled," replied the complacent Mrs. Lucas—"Dear me," rejoined Mr. Lucas, "I must certainly call at Webberly House, and inquire after the health of the family; I thought they never left town till August: perhaps they are come down for change of air."—"And Lucy and I must pay our respects to them too, they are always so very polite."—"They are never very *civil*, I take it," said Mrs. Crosbie; "I believe, in my heart, they would never come near their country neighbours, but to show off their town airs on them."—"Well, for my part,"

observed Mr. Crosbie, "with due deference be it spoken, I think town airs should be laid by for town people, kept *in usum jus habentis*, for those who understand 'em."—"That's what you never could do, my dear," replied the lady.—Mrs. Lucas, as usual, slipping in an assenting nod to every successive observation from each person, while she as unremittingly attended to the tea and cake. "Well, I'm sure, at all events," said her daughter Nancy, "they are very genteel: what a lovely green bonnet the little Miss Webberly had on!—she's the eldest, I believe."—"I'm sure, if the bonnet was lovely, the face under it wasn't; the two together are for all the world like a full blown daffodil in its green case."

Notwithstanding Mrs. Crosbie had thus taken occasion to express her dislike of the family in general, she was not less ready than the rest of the little circle to pay her annual visit at Webberly House;

and, as all were anxious to wait on the ladies in question, either from motives of civility, or interest, or curiosity, it was speedily settled, that the party should adjourn thither on the following morning. All particulars of their dress, their conveyance, &c., being finally arranged, the four seniors of Mrs. Martin's visitors sat down to penny whist, while she seated herself at the corner of the card table, ready to cut in, snuff candles, or make civil observations between the deals.

Lucy, and Nancy Lucas, strolled into the garden, ostensibly to pull currants, but, in reality, to talk over Mr. Brown, the apothecary's apprentice, and Mr. Slater's hopeful son and heir, whose professed admiration of Miss Lucas had lately been eclipsed by a flash of military ardour, that had induced him to enter into the Yorkshire militia. At length Mrs. Martin's fears of the damp grass and evening dew induced the two

eternal friends to return to the parlour, where the fortunate attainment of an odd trick, by finishing the rubber, broke up the little party, who dispersed with much the same bustle with which they had entered. While Mrs. Martin pursued her retreating visitors as far as the white pales, with renewed offers of a glass of currant wine, hopes and fears relative to the company catching cold, and assurances that she and Lucy would certainly be ready before eleven o'clock for Mr. Lucas, with a profusion of thanks for his offer of calling for them in his gig.

CHAPTER II.

Mons. De Sotenville—Que dites vous à cela?
George Dandin—Je dis que ce sont là des contes à dormir debout *. MOLIERE.

ABOUT eleven next day, a crazy machine, in the days of our grandfathers called a noddy, appeared at Mrs. Martin's door. In it was seated Mr. Lucas in his best black suit and flaxen-wig, with his gold-headed cane between his knees, his hands being sufficiently occupied in reining an ill-trimmed cart-horse, every movement of whose powerful hind leg threatened destruction to the awkward vehicle. The good-humoured Lucy soon skipped in, and seated herself as bodkin; but to mount Mrs.

* "What do you say to that?"—"I say such recitals are only fit to sleep over."

Martin was a task of greater difficulty, as the gig was of considerable altitude, and the horse, teased by the flies, could not be kept quiet two minutes at a time; a chair was first produced without effect, but at last, with the aid of her maid Peggy, the neighbouring smith, and the kitchen steps commonly used to wind up the jack, she was fairly seated; and ere her laughter or her fears had subsided, they overtook the village post-chaise, containing Mr. and Mrs. Crosbie, and Mrs. and Miss Lucas.—The travellers in the gig were incommoded by a dusty road, and a beaming hot sun; the effects of which were dreaded by the good aunt for Lucy's blue silk bonnet and spencer, which had been purchased two years before, during their above-mentioned visit to London, which was still their frequent theme, and only standard of fashion. However, they proceeded on the whole much to their satisfaction, and after driving nearly six

miles, reached an ostentatious porter's lodge and gate, a close copy of that at Sion, which announced the entrance to Webberly House. The approach, with doublings and windings that would have puzzled the best harrier in Sussex, did not accomplish concealing the house at any one sweep, but displayed to Lucy's delighted eyes a huge pile—*ci-devant* brick, now glorying in a coat of Roman cement, further adorned with clumsy virandas due north and east, and an open porch in the southern sun. On one side of the proud mansion was a sunk fence, and ha! ha!—on the other a shrubbery, quite inadequate to the task assigned it of hiding the glaring brick-wall of a kitchen garden, which occupied nearly as large a space as the whole of the pleasure-ground in front.

On the scanty lawn was pitched a marquee; at the foot of it was a pond filled with gold and silver fishes, over which was suspended a Chinese bridge,

leading to a grotto and hermitage, at a small distance from the house.—Mr. Lucas, resigning the reins to Lucy, alighted to give notice of the arrival of the party. After a few minutes delay, hasty footsteps were heard in the hall, and a couple of house-maids scudded across, bearing dust-pans and brushes, and running down one of the side passages, called out in no very gentle voice, "William! Edward! here's company!" "Company!" yawned out William, while he stretched his arms to their utmost length, and, as he stopped to look at his fine watch, which, as well as his master's, had numerous seals with French mottos, declared "Pon honour, it isn't one o'clock;" and wondered "what could bring those country-folk at that time o'day!"—then, settling his cravat with one hand, and pulling up his gallowses with the other, leisurely walked to the porch, where, with a gesture between leering and bowing, he most in-

coherently answered the question of "At home, or not at home;" and without giving himself the trouble of thinking which was actually the case, ushered the visitors into the drawing-room, leaving the business of negociating their audience to the lady's maid.

The beaming sun displayed the unsubsided dust and motes the house-maids had so lately raised, and the village party were nearly stifled with the effluvia of countless hot-house plants, whose united scent was too strong to be called perfume: their entrance was impeded by stools, cushions, tabourets, squabs, ottomans, fauteuils, sofas, screens, book-stands, flower-stands, and tables of all sorts and sizes. An unguarded push endangered the china furniture of a writing-table, and a painted velvet cushion laid Mr. Crosbie prostrate on the floor. Mr. Lucas, perceiving the difficulties of the navigation, very quietly seated himself behind the door, but not in peace—

for he was nearly stunned by the chatter and contentions of a paroquet and a macaw, joined to the shrill song of some indefatigable canaries hung on the outside of the opposite window, which scarcely outvied the yelping of a lap-dog, that Mrs. Martin's centre of gravity had discomfited, when she seated herself in one of the fauteuils. Meantime, Lucy and Nancy, with considerable expertness, gratified themselves with examining the furniture, a task which would probably have occupied them for a week, as the incongruous mixture seemed to resemble the emptying of an upholsterer's room, a china manufactory, and a print-shop. The curtains, five to a window, were hung for all seasons of the year at once, and consisted of rich cloth, scarlet moreen, brilliant chintz, delicate silk, and white muslin, to serve as blinds, fringed with gold. The sofa and chair tribe (for to designate them would require a nomenclature as accu-

rate and extensive as Lavoisier's chemical one,) were covered with every shade of colour, every variety of texture, and were in form Grecian, Chinese, Roman, Egyptian, Parisian, Gothic, and Turkish. The astonished visitors remained in the silence of perplexity for nearly a quarter of an hour, but it was then broken by Mrs. Crosbie exclaiming, with her usual acrimony—"Well, I'm sure, if I was Mrs. Sullivan, and was *forced* to go to a pawnbroker's for my settee and chair-frames, I would at least make my covers all of a piece!—What folks will do to make up a show!—I'm sure those musty old chests an't a whit better than what's in my grandmother's garret; and I gave my little William the other day, for a play-thing, a china image as like that white woman and child as two peas."—"Though to be sure all these are very fine," said Mrs. Martin, "Sir Henry Seymour's is the house for me; three drawing-rooms with not a pin difference;

and up stairs always six bed-rooms of a pattern—then Mrs. Galton is so neat! not a cobweb to be seen in the house. —Bless me, Lucy! your cheek is all dirty, and your gloves such a figure!"— "Why, don't you see," interrupted Mrs. Crosbie, "that the china is brimfull of dust! such slattern folks, pshaw!"—To all which Mrs. Lucas returned her usual assenting, "He—hem!" Mr. Lucas, in time recovering from his first dismay, rose from "*The place of his unrest,*" and, with Mr. Crosbie, proceeded to examine the contents of a mongrel article between a cabinet and a table, on which were *thrown* rather than *placed* a variety of curiosities; such as, a stuffed hog-in-armour, a case of tropical birds, flying-fish, sharks' jaws, a petrified lobster, edible swallows' nests, and Chinese balls; with numerous mineral specimens neatly labelled, zeolite, mica, volcanic glass, tourmaline, &c. "*Multum in parvo,*" said Mr. Crosbie, with a smirk at his

own latinity; "Young Mr. Webberly must be vastly learned," replied Mr. Lucas, "I should like to talk to him about the plants of the West Indies, and the practice of physic in those parts, for all the planters are obliged to attend to the health of the poor negroes for their own profit, if they don't do it for humanity's sake." Here the good man was electrified by a violent ringing of bells, followed by the sound of a sharp female voice, running through all the notes of the gamut in a scolding tone, of which the visitors could only hear detached sentences, such as, "I *insist* upon it, you never let them in again—how could you say we were at home? Can I never drive into your silly pate, that we are never at home to a *hired* postchaise, or to any open carriage, except a curricle and *two* out-riders, or a landaulet and four?"—"It wasn't me, Miss, it was William; I always attend to your directions ma'am—I denied you the other day to

your own uncle and aunt, because they came in a buggy."—"Uncle, Sir! I have no uncle.—Well, I give orders at the porter's lodge to-morrow—Go and ask Miss Wildenheim to receive them; and if she won't, say we are all out; I tell you once for all, I never will be disturbed at my morning studies till four o'clock, and *then* not except by *people of condition*." Soon after this tirade, a light foot crossing the hall prepared the confounded party for the entrance of the Iris of this angry Juno. But when Miss Wildenheim opened the door, her elegantly affable curtsy and benignant smile dispersed the gathering frowns on the visages of the disappointed groupe.

This young lady's politeness proceeded from the workings of a kind heart guided by a clear head: it was a polish which owed its lustre to the intrinsic value of the gem it embellished, not a superficial varnish spread over a worthless substance, which a slight col-

lision would destroy, rendering the flaws it had for a time concealed but the more conspicuous. With one glance of her dark eye she perceived, that the good people were offended, and while she made the best apology she could for the non-appearance of the Webberly family, her cheek glowed with indignation at their insolent carriage to modest worth: the attentive suavity of her manner was more than usually pleasing to the unassuming but insulted party, and her endeavours to soothe their wounded pride were quickly rewarded with the success they merited. Miss Wildenheim in turn enquired for all the relations of each individual present, whose existence had ever come to her knowledge; and in her search after appropriate conversation, put in requisition every other subject of chit-chat, her small stock of that current coin furnished her with. But now —"the eloquent blood," which had spoken "in her cheek and so divinely

wrought," no longer tinging it with "vermeil hues," her pallidity struck Mrs. Martin's kind heart with a pang of sorrow. "My *dear* Miss Wildenheim," said she, in a tone that showed the epithet was not a word of course, "I'm afraid your visit to London has not agreed as well with you as ours did with Lucy and me, you don't look so fresh coloured as you did in the beginning of spring." "Ah! Mrs. Martin," interrupted Mr. Lucas, "that high colour was a hectic symptom, I am not altogether sorry to see it has disappeared; I hope, Miss Wildenheim, you have nearly recovered from the effects of that smart fever you had last winter." With a look of thanks to both enquirers, Mr. Lucas' *ci-devant* patient replied, "Perfectly, my dear Sir; it must have been a most inveterate disorder, that could have baffled the skill and kind attention—you exerted for my benefit." Mr. Lucas sapiently shook his head, and expressed his doubts as to her

perfect recovery. "Believe me, Sir, I feel quite well, my illness was only caused by change of climate." At the word *climate*, the heretofore placid brow of the fair speaker was clouded by an expression of ill-concealed anguish; for that word had conjured up the remembrance of days of hope and joy—of tenderness, on which the grave had closed for ever! which with all the ardency of youthful feeling, alike poignant in sorrow as in joy, she contrasted, in thought's utmost rapidity, with the dreary present, where each day glided like its predecessor down the stream of time, uncheered by the converse of a kindred mind, unblessed by the smile of affectionate love.

To hide her emotion she rose to ring the bell, apparently for the purpose of ordering a luncheon, which it was the etiquette of the neighbourhood to present to every morning visitor. The greater part of the family were, at that moment, at breakfast, and therefore the summons

was not quickly obeyed; but at length a tray was brought in, glittering in all the luxury of china, plate, and glass, and loaded with cold meat, fruit, and a variety of confectionary, at the names or contents of which Mrs. Martin's utmost knowledge of cookery could not enable her to guess. However as she did not consider ignorance in this instance as bliss, she immediately commenced her acquaintance with them; and the whole party, having done ample justice to the repast, prepared to depart; and it was settled that as steps could not easily be procured, the arrangement of the vehicles should be changed, Miss Lucas resigning her place in the post chaise to Mrs. Martin.

Miss Wildenheim had scarcely made her farewell curtsy at the door, when as the carriages drove off Mrs. Martin exclaimed, "What a sweet young lady Miss Wildenheim is." "Oh!" said Mrs. Crosbie, "those French misses have always honey on their lips." "I wonder

how she happens to speak such good English, for her eyes, complexion, and accent are quite foreign," observed her spouse. "And I hope you'll add, her manner too," returned the lady: "I was quite ashamed of her when she first came to Webberly House, she used to have so many antics with her hands; now she is something like; but though we have improved her, still her countenance has never the exact same look three minutes together; and if you say a civil thing to her, she grows as red as if you had slapped her in the face." "Mr. Temple told me," said Mrs. Martin, "that she grieved more after Mr. Sullivan, when he died last January, than all the rest of the family put together. He told me one day, poor man, that she was the daughter of a German baron." "Ah, Mrs. Martin," interrupted Mr. Crosbie, laughing, "I'm afraid there was a mistake of gender and case there; a *Baronness* perhaps she might be daughter to, as an action might lie

against me for defamation, I won't say by whom." "You are both wrong," said his wife, "for *Mrs*. Sullivan's *maid* informed me, (and she knows but every thing) that Miss Wildenheim was Mr. Sullivan's natural daughter by a German *Princess* (God forgive him), when he was a general in the Austrian service. I dare say she is a papist, for he was a papist, and they are *all* papists in foreign parts." "Papist or not," replied Mrs. Martin, "I'm sure she practises the Christian virtue of humility; I wish Miss Webberly would take example by her, and learn to be civil." "I never saw any thing like the airs of the whole family," rejoined Mrs. Crosbie, bursting with passion. "I'll take care to affront them, the very first time they put their noses in Deane." Here Mr. Crosbie took the alarm, for he recollected certain deeds and conveyances, young Webberly had spoken to him about, and therefore said, "Indeed, my dear, we have no right to be offended;

it's only the way of the house: did'nt you hear the footman tell Miss Webberly he had refused to let in her own uncle, and after all, she didn't object to *us*, but only to the *gig* and *postchaise*." After some bitter observations, followed by silent reflection, Mrs. Crosbie apparently acceded to her husband's argument, and consented to acquit the Webberlys on the flaw his ingenuity had discovered in the indictment she had made out against them.

In the humble society of Deane even she had inferiors, in whose eyes her consequence was raised by her annual visits at Webberly House; and who never guessed that the rudeness she practised to them, was a mere transfer of that she submitted to receive from the insolent caprice of these satellites of fashion.

From whence does the strange infatuation arise, that makes so many people in all ranks of society suppose, they are honoured by the acquaintance of that

immediately above them, when their intercourse is so frequently only an interchange of insult and servility? Do they suppose, that when the scale of their consequence is kicked down on one side, it rises proportionally on the other?

The comments of the travellers on the Webberly family continued for the remainder of the drive; and perhaps had the objects of their animadversions heard their remarks, they might have felt, that the proud privilege of being impertinent scarcely compensated for the severity of the criticism its exertion called forth.

At length the party separated—Mrs. Crosbie to show a new edition of fine airs to the wondering Mrs. Slater—the other ladies to discuss their excursion again and again, over "cups which cheer, but not inebriate."

CHAPTER III.

Something there is more needful than expense,
And something previous even to taste—'tis sense.
POPE.

Dum vitant stulti vitia, in contraria currunt *.
HORACE.

THE family at Webberly House was the only one in the neighbourhood of Deane, which lived in a style of ostentatious expense; its members vainly endeavouring to purchase respect by extravagance, and to transfer the ideas and hours of the *beau monde* to a place totally unfit for their reception. The only families within a distance of ten miles of their residence were—Sir Henry Seymour's, at Deane Hall — Squire Thornbull's, at

* When fools would avoid one extreme, they run into the other.

Hunting Field, and Mr. Temple's, at the parsonage of Deane; all of whom lived in the most quiet manner. Beyond this distance, however, the country was more thickly inhabited, and the town of York, in the race and assize week, presented sufficient attractions to make a drive of thirty miles no impediment to the Webberlys visiting it at those times, though its allurements were not great enough to tempt their immediate neighbours from their homes. Mrs. Sullivan had purchased Webberly House, two years previous to the commencement of this narration, on the faith of an advertisement nearly as deceptious as the famous one of a celebrated auctioneer, that procured the sale of an estate on the strength of a "hanging-wood," which proved to be a gibbet on an adjoining common.

Webberly House—formerly called Simson's Folly—had been purposely tricked up for sale by a prodigal heir, when obliged to dispose of his paternal estate

to discharge the debts his extravagance had incurred. As a second dupe was not easily to be found, Mrs. Sullivan now vainly endeavoured to part with it, as neither she nor her children could reconcile themselves to living in so retired a part of the country.

Mrs. Sullivan was the only child of an extremely rich hosier in Cheapside, who perhaps had saved more money than he had made, and fully instructed his daughter in all the arts of frugality, limiting her knowledge of all other arts and sciences to considerable manual dexterity in making "a pudding and a shirt," which he considered the ultimatum of female education. When Miss Leatherly was thus, according to long established opinion, qualified for matrimony, her large fortune brought her in reward a West Indian planter as a husband, from whom she acquired those habits of ostentatious arrogance, which, united to her early imbibed parsimony, formed the principal

traits of her character. By this marriage Mrs. Sullivan had one son and two daughters; and, fifteen years after the birth of the former, became a widow, with a large jointure, as well as all her father's riches, at her own disposal. She received the addresses of many fortune hunters, but finally gave the preference to a handsome, good natured, dissipated Irishman, whose name she now bore. Mr. Sullivan at the period of his marriage was past the prime of life; he had long served in the Austrian armies, (for being a Catholic he was incapacitated from holding any high rank in those of his native sovereign, and therefore preferred following another standard), but his military career procuring him little except scars and honours, he gladly availed himself of the wealthy widow's evident partiality, and at first thought himself most fortunate in becoming the possessor of so large a fortune; yet soon found he had dearly purchased the affluence which inflicted on him, not only the

disgusting illiberal vulgarity of his wife, but the petulant rudeness and self-sufficiency of her children. His only consolation was a daughter Mrs. Sullivan had presented him with, in the first year of their marriage, and his happiness as a father, made him in some degree forget his miseries as a husband. His heart was completely wrapped up in the charming little Caroline, and bitterly did he repent on her account, that his former prodigality had obliged him to yield to his elder brother's desire of cutting off the entail of the family estate; which must otherwise have descended to her, being settled on the females, as well as males of their ancient house. Mr. and Mrs. Sullivan associated but little together; as she was never happy except when she accompanied her elder daughters to the most fashionable watering places; whilst he, remaining at home, devoted most of his time to the little Caroline. But here, unfortunately, in the attempt to banish

the uneasy feelings of his mind, he by degrees formed a habit of indulging in the pleasures of the bottle, in a greater degree than strict propriety permits. About three months before his death, the little domestic comfort he had enjoyed was exchanged for the most complete disquietude, as at that time the jealousy of his wife was roused by his introducing Miss Wildenheim into his family as his ward.—Notwithstanding his most solemn assurances, that this young lady was the daughter of a German baron, who had not only long been his commanding officer but his most zealous friend, Mrs. Sullivan constantly asserted she was his natural child. Such a paternity was in her eyes an almost unpardonable crime; for, considering her inferiority of rank and sex, she was still more unreasonable than Henry the Eighth, who made it high treason for those he sought as partners to his throne not to confess all the errors they had been guilty

of in a state of celibacy. Perhaps nothing but the stipend received for Adelaide's maintenance could have reconciled Mrs. Sullivan to her residence at Webberly House, for she was too avaricious not to submit to a great deal for three hundred a year.

When Miss Wildenheim first appeared in Mr. Sullivan's family she was in the deepest mourning for a parent, who his wife felt convinced was her mother. It must be confessed, the affection Mr. Sullivan showed Adelaide, and his distracted state of mind from the period of her arrival, gave a very plausible colour to his wife's suspicions. He avoided the society of his family, and giving himself up to his habit of drinking, it in a short time proved fatal; for returning late one night from squire Thornbull's in a state of intoxication, he was killed at his own gate by falling off his horse. Miss Wildenheim's consequent affliction, and dangerous illness, left no doubt in Mrs. Sulli-

van's mind, as to the justice of her surmises. Enraged by this apparent confirmation of her imagined wrongs, and urged by the envious hatred the Miss Webberlys showed of Adelaide's superior charms, she determined no longer to retain under her roof an object on these accounts so obnoxious; and, as a flattering unction to her soul, persuaded herself, that a girl with ten thousand pounds fortune could never be at any great loss for a home. But at length her darling passion, covetousness, prevailed over her resentment; as she recollected, that should the brother of her late husband ever hear of her treating in such a manner a girl Mr. Sullivan had left under her protection, and in whose fate (from whatever motive) he had shown so deep an interest, her unkindness might be construed into disrespect to his memory, and as such be resented with the warmth of family pride and affection, so natural to the Irish character; and perhaps prompt the offended

brother to revenge the affront, by leaving his estate to a distant cousin, who had been dreaded by her husband as a rival to Caroline. These and other pecuniary considerations finally induced Mrs. Sullivan to accept the guardianship of Miss Wildenheim in conjunction with a Mr. Austin, who was trustee to her fortune, and was said to be an old and faithful friend of her father.

However Mrs. Sullivan had failed in the character of a wife, she had always been weakly indulgent as a mother, and was easily led by her children into every expensive folly. Her son's command of money had made him, on his first entrance into life, a very desirable acquaintance to some needy young men of fashion, who, in return for the pecuniary accommodation he afforded them, did him the favour to turn his head and corrupt his morals. As he became daily more ambitious to emulate his new associates in all their extravagance, he persuaded his mother to

change her style of living, in order to imitate as closely as possible that of the relatives of his *professed* friends. At this critical period, he had unfortunately found Mr. Sullivan no less solicitous of joining those secondary circles of fashion, to which alone they could expect admittance, from his having long been accustomed to lead as a bachelor a life of gaiety and dissipation; and the Miss Webberlys still more zealously promoted his wishes, being equally solicitous to reach the threshold of fashion, which had long been the unattained object of their highest hope. This was perhaps the only point in the chapter of possibilities, on which the whole family could agree.

Mrs. Sullivan reversed the order of nature, and followed the path her children traced for her, supposing them to be better instructed in such things than herself; for she knew they had received a superabundance of the *means*, and, poor woman! she had not sense to perceive they had

missed the *ends* of education. In encouraging her children in the pursuit of fashionable follies, Mrs. Sullivan but followed the general example of wealthy parents, whom we so frequently behold acting like the worshippers of Moloch in elder days, making their sons and their daughters pass through the fires of dissipation, in the chance of drawing them forth from the ordeal with greater external brightness; but the scorching flames too often wither to the root the shoots of honour, benevolence, and truth.

In nothing was Mrs. Sullivan's lamentable imitation of her children's follies more perceptible, than in her conversation, which was a mixture of Cheapside vulgarisms and Newmarket cant, with here and there a stray ornament from her daughters' vocabularies of sentimental and scientifical jargon; the whole misapplied and mispronounced, in a manner that would have done honour to Mrs. Malaprop herself!

Miss Webberly's person was much in the predicament Solomon laments in his song for his sister; but she had in compensation an addendum which the Jewish fair had not, in the shape of a protuberance on the left shoulder, which however she always endeavoured to balance by applying to the right the judicious stuffing of Madame Huber's stays; and her deformity was only perceptible by some slight traces in her countenance, in which there was nothing else remarkable, except a pair of little black eyes, rather pert than sparkling. Conscious that she could not shine as a beauty, she resolved on being a "*bel esprit*," for which she was nearly as ill qualified by nature; and, reversing the fable of Achilles habiting himself in female attire, she put on an armour she could not carry, and grasped at weapons she was unable to wield. And as she sought knowledge "with all her seeking," not to promote her own happiness, but to subtract from

that of others, by mortifying their self-love, in the anticipated triumphs of her own, her preposterous vanity led her to deform her mind as much by art with misplaced and uncouth excrescences of pedantry, as her person was by the unlucky addition it had received from nature: but while she sought to conceal the one with the most anxious care, she laboured as incessantly to display the other; thus resembling the infatuated being, who first held up for the worship of his fellow mortal a disgusting reptile, or a worthless weed.

Miss Cecilia Webberly was in face and and figure entitled to the appellation of a fine bouncing girl, if for that a mass of flesh and blood exquisitely coloured could suffice; but though to lilies and roses of the most perfect hues were superadded fine blue eyes and beautiful flaxen hair, her countenance was neither good-natured nor gay, but indicative of the most supercilious self-conceit. She had en-

joyed what are usually termed the *advantages* of a London boarding school, and through their influence had acquired sufficient French to read the tales of Marmontel, by a strange misnomer called "*Contes moraux*," and to which, for the benefit of the rising generation, we would humbly advise prefixing a syllable in any future edition. From these tales she learned to be sentimental, and fancied herself in turn the heroine of "*Le mari Sylph*," "*L'heureux Divorce*," &c.

Moreover, the fair Cecilia had here been taught to move her ponderous fingers with considerable swiftness over the keys of a piano forte, and to exercise her powerful lungs in Vauxhall songs.

In this seminary she was unfortunately inoculated with a virus, that totally diseased a heart nature had intended for better purposes—namely, an aching desire after fashionable life, which led her to caricature those airs of *ton* which she had not *tact* to imitate. The eye that

is always turned upwards must be blinded by the brightness of a sphere it is not fashioned to; and Cecilia Webberly was so dazzled by the accounts she read in the daily prints, and La Belle Assemblée, of "great lords and ladies dressed out on gay days," that she looked on the inhabitants of Bloomsbury Square with sovereign contempt, her mother and sister inclusive, who notwithstanding encouraged and emulated her flights, flattering themselves that her eccentricities would carry her, and them as her attendants, into regions of splendour, though in truth they were only thus brought forth to the "garish eye of day," to be exposed to the contempt and ridicule her folly excited.

A few days after the expedition of Mrs. Martin and her friends to Webberly House, as she was standing one fine morning at her parlour window, Mrs. Sullivan's dashing equipage drove past, and her involuntary exclamation at the sud-

den, and to her unpractised eyes, terrifying stop of the four horses, which were a second before at their utmost speed, was changed into an expression of pleasure, when she saw Miss Wildenheim alone alight at Mr. Slater's shop, and the showy carriage from which she descended drive away ere the door was well closed; for Mrs. Sullivan and her daughters never condescended to enter *the shop*, as it was in token of pre-eminence called in the village of Deane. The great Frederick has wisely remarked, that "*custom* guides fools in place of *reason*;" and they had sapiently agreed amongst themselves, that "no lady of fashion was ever seen in a shop out of Bond Street;" but as for many reasons they were always anxious to prevail on Miss Wildenheim to execute their commissions, they took care not to inform her of the solecism in etiquette they had thus discovered, lest her timid and scrupulous attention to propriety should overcome her good nature, and deprive them

of the benefit of her taste and judgment. The place of sale these ladies thus contemned, was a rustic pantheon-physitechnicon, where were to be had—food for the mind, at least for those who were content to "prey on garbage," and countless articles for the ladies' use. Part of the counter was covered with stationery of all descriptions, school books, last speeches, and ballads, besides a few miscellaneous articles in the reading way, such as Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress, the Seven Champions of Christendom, and the Methodistical Magazine, relating how Mr. Goodman "put on by faith," not "the armour of the Lord," but a pair of "leathern conveniences," vulgarly called *breeches*. The remainder of the counter showed, through glass panes, plated and pinchbeck *tiaras* for farmers' daughters, and every species of low-priced disfigurement for the person, in the shape of necklace or ear-ring, with a variety of other articles of equal utility. The

drawers, on one side of the counter, contained groceries of all kinds; those on the other, a no less various assortment of haberdashery and millinery, the latter, when unsaleable, being altered from year to year to "the newest London fashion." The shop also displayed a considerable store of hardware and crockery, from the unglazed brown pan to the gold edged tea cup and painted sailor's pig—lastly, boasting of a delectable circulating library, which presented volumes that, like the highly prized works of classic fame, had a most oleaginous odour.

The contents of the shop were scarcely less various than the occupations of its master and his family. In part of the second floor, Miss Slater held her "Academy for young ladies." In the other her sister performed the office of mantua and corset maker. Their father was upholsterer, undertaker, and *barber*, and by consequence *politician* to the parish. His gratuitous office of quidnunc had per

haps gained him more wealth and patro nage than all his others collectively, as in it he had never made any direct attack on the purses of his neighbours, but by reading the newspapers and gazette every market day free of cost, he assembled all the farmers of the vicinity in his shop, who generally discovered something amongst its various contents they felt an imperious necessity to purchase, thus successfully following the plan of the ingenious advertiser of

——*A pair of globes for nothing!!!*——
with an atlas, price five guineas.

On the above mentioned occasions Mr. Slater was furiously loyal, in a flaming red waistcoat, which scarcely rivalled his rubicund face.—When he first became the village orator, he had endeavoured, from motives of interest, to persuade others he felt more than he really did; and, as is commonly the case with those who *exaggerate* but are not *hypocritical*, he ended in feeling more than he got cre-

dit for.—In the proceedings of the English government he now really thought, that " whatever is is right."—And perhaps it is to be regretted, that in his class this belief is not more general.—Illiterate politicians are scarcely less dangerous than self-constituted physicians—It requires men of skill to medicate for the body physical or political.—Quacks in either injure in proportion to their ignorance and consequent audacity; it may often be better to let a disease alone, in the constitution of the state or individual, than to run the risk of aggravating it by the nostrums of the venders of concealed poisons.

Mr. Slater's window was always adorned with a bulletin of the news of the day, of his own writing! and this singular composition set at defiance all rules of grammar and orthography; but he had none of the pride of authorship, and unfeignedly thanked the village schoolmaster for his emendations, though per-

haps it might sometimes be said, that the *correction* was the worst of the two.

The good man also amused himself with what he called "mapping" and "drawing." The few unoccupied spaces in his shop walls were stuck over with representations of the Thalaba of modern history in a variety of woful plights; and he had made more changes in the face of Europe than that archconjurer himself—for, to elucidate the Duke of Wellington's campaigns, he exhibited a map with Portugal at the wrong side of Spain*! not failing to take similar liberties in his representations of *actions* of various kinds.

It may he supposed, that a shop so filled, and a master thus accomplished, would be unremittingly attended.—In truth, "The Shop" was seldom empty; and what with haranguing, bargaining, and the ceaseless screaking of the pack-

* Matter of fact.

thread on its ever revolving roller, with interludes of breaking sugar, and chopping ham, the noise on market days was so deafening, that the tower of Babel might serve as an emblem, but that there only one faculty was confounded, whilst here three of the five senses were assailed at once.

At the moment of Miss Wildenheim's entrance, however, a comparative "silence reigned within the walls,"—as in the shop were only Mrs. Temple (wife of the rector) and her youngest son and daughter, the one teazing her for a Robinson Crusoe, the other coaxing for a doll; but at the sight of their " dear dote Miss Wildenheim" the little petitioners forgot their requests, and throwing their arms about her neck, to the no small damage of the muslin frill, that contrasted its snowy whiteness with the sable hue of her other garments, made her cheek glow with their kisses, whilst their friendly mother not less cordially shook her hand.

After a little social chat, Miss Wildenheim proceeded to fulfil the object of her visit to the shop, namely, to choose a novel for Miss Cecilia Webberly.—"What are you looking for there, my dear, with so much perseverance? any thing will do for her," said Mrs. Temple.—"Here's the Delicate Distress—The Innocent Seduction."—"I fear, from their titles, they would serve to aid her in her search after romance; don't you think that would be a pity?—I was looking for Patronage, or Almeria."—The peculiar tone, half foreign, half pathetic, in which Adelaide said the word *pity*, joined to the ludicrous but just parallel she had in sober sadness unconsciously drawn for Cecilia Webberly, struck with so comic an effect on Mrs. Temple's risible nerves, that she burst out into an uncontrollable fit of laughter. Adelaide opened her eyelids to their utmost expansion, and cast the beautiful orbs they had concealed on Mrs. Temple's face, with a look of min-

gled surprise and inquiry.—"I only thought, my dear girl, (laying her hand on Miss Wildenheim's arm), it was a sin you should waste your morality and your *pit-tie* in so useless a manner: believe me, Miss Edgeworth's wit and sense would be lost on a girl too stupid to comprehend the one, and too silly to profit by the other: if Miss Cecilia Webberly were only a *fool*, I might encourage your laudable endeavours, but———"

"Hush, hush, my dear Mrs. Temple, here are strangers;" and turning round Mrs. Temple discovered Sir Henry Seymour's carriage at the door. It was a vehicle as old fashioned as the owner, "the good Sir Henry," and formed a striking contrast to the showy *cortége* of the Webberly family. It was drawn in a steady quiet trot, by four heavy steeds as gray as their driver, who, seated on a hammer-cloth adorned with fringes as numerous as those on the petticoat of a modern belle, carefully avoided the sharp

turns and charioteering skill of the Four-in-hand Club. Sir Henry Seymour's carriage contained only his sister-in-law, Mrs. Galton, who was addressed by Mrs. Temple with all the intimacy of friendship, and answered a variety of inquiries concerning Miss Seymour, which were made with real interest.

After giving Mrs. Temple an invitation to join a dinner party at the hall on the following Thursday, Mrs. Galton whispered, "I suspect, that elegant girl in mourning is the interesting foreigner whose unexpected appearance at Webberly House last November excited so much gossip."—"Yes, she is."—"Then pray introduce me; we have never met, though I called on her the last time I visited Mrs. Sullivan." This request was soon complied with; and the ceremony being over, Mrs. Galton politely appealed to Adelaide's taste, regarding the colours of some silks she was choosing to work a trimming for her niece's first gown,

which, on her ensuing birth-day, was to mark her approach to womanhood; for in Sir Henry Seymour's family the difference in dress between sixteen and forty-five was preserved: Selina had not yet laid aside her white frock, nor was Mrs. Galton in her own person anxious to antedate the period of second childhood. Mrs. Martin and Lucy, accompanied by Mrs. Lucas, now walked in to pay their compliments to the ladies they had seen enter, and were as usual received by Mrs. Galton with the utmost civility; and as she knew that a visit to Deane Hall was an event and a distinction in the annals of village history, she included them in her invitation for Thursday, which was delightfully accepted by them. Mrs. Sullivan's carriage having now returned for Miss Wildenheim, she took her leave. And Mr. Mordaunt, having executed some business the worthy baronet had intrusted him with, entered the shop, and re-

minded Mrs. Galton, that if they did not hasten home, Sir Henry would be kept waiting dinner, and, what was to him of much more interest, Selina Seymour would be disappointed of her evening ride.

CHAPTER IV.

Each look, each motion, wak'd a new born grace,
That o'er her form its transient glory cast;
Some lovelier wonder soon usurp'd the place,
Chas'd by a charm still lovelier than the last.
LYTTELTON.

MR. MORDAUNT, finding it impossible to persuade Sir Henry Seymour's veteran coachman to resign his office of charioteer, or even willingly to admit a partner on his throne, was obliged to solace himself with Mrs. Galton's conversation, till they entered the park of Deane. At last, as the carriage turned up the long dark avenue which led to the magnificent though antique mansion, his delighted eye beheld Selina, as she supported her father, whilst "with measured step and slow" he walked up and down the broad smooth terrace, which stretched along the

south front of the house, and commanded all the beauties of the rich vale below. Her fragile form and firm yet elastic step were contrasted with Sir Henry's tottering feeble gait. But though her sparkling eyes gave a joyous welcome, even from a distance, to Mrs. Galton and Augustus, yet, with the fond solicitude of filial love, she restrained her father's hastening steps, till Augustus relieved her from her charge; then light as a zephyr which scarcely bends the flower over which it passes, she flew to Mrs. Galton, and had already seen, if not examined, all her purchases, recapitulated her various occupations during her three hours' absence, and made Mrs. Galton repeat twice over all the particulars she could recollect, of "dear Mrs. Temple," and Miss Wildenheim, before Augustus had conducted Sir Henry to the hall door, or replied to more than half his inquiries about "poor Brown's lease, and the arrangements that were made for his wife and children."

Selina Seymour was nearly seventeen; her person

> "Fair as the forms that, wove in fancy's loom,
> "Float in light vision round the poet's head;"

and her mind as well cultivated as could be expected under the peculiar circumstances of her situation; for she had lived entirely in the country, and never had as yet an opportunity of acquiring that brilliancy of execution in the fine arts, by which so many of our modern girls of fashion rival the painters, and the dancers, and the singers, and the players on musical instruments, who live only by the exertion of their talents in those different lines. Of what are usually called *accomplishments* she was comparatively ignorant. She knew little or nothing of fancy works—had never made any pasteboard screens—could neither waltz nor play on the flageolet—nor beat the tambourine in all the different attitudes practised and taught to young ladies by

the Duke of York's band — but with several modern languages she was well acquainted, and had learned to draw from Mrs. Galton, who particularly excelled in miniature painting, and delighted in transmitting all her knowledge to her adopted child. Music was however Selina's favourite amusement, and for it she early discovered a decided genius. An old blind organist, from the town of ———, generally attended her for three months every summer, and certainly taught her well the only part of the art he understood, namely, thorough bass—but of the soul of music, he, poor man, had no idea; for that she was indebted solely to her own intensity of feeling; and whatever execution she possessed she had acquired by the indefatigable practice of such lessons of Handel's, Corelli's, Scarlatti's, and Bach's, as her father's old music chest afforded; for Sir Henry had not added an air to his collection since the death of her mother Lady

Seymour, nor did he suppose it possible, that any improvement could have taken place in the art of composition since that period. Perhaps, had he heard Selina play some of Mozart's admirable melodies, he might have been induced to acknowledge their merit, as he generally thought all she did was perfection; though in her education he never interfered—the care of that had been intrusted, ever since she had lost her mother, to Mrs. Galton, and the excellent rector of the parish, Mr. Temple, who had been tutor to Sir Henry Seymour's ward, Augustus Mordaunt. With them Selina often joined in studies of a graver cast than those usually appropriated to her age and sex. And perhaps the peculiar style of her education was the one best adapted to her disposition. She had naturally uncommon vivacity. "Her cheek was yet unprofaned by a tear," and her buoyant spirits had never been depressed by those unfeeling prohibitions and restraints,

which, "like a worm i' th' bud," feed on the opening blossom, and turn the happiest season of our lives into days of protracted penance. To her elasticity of spirits and brilliancy of imagination, which, but for an uncommon superiority of talent, might have degenerated into frivolity of mind, this calm and almost masculine education formed an admirable counterpoise. But yet such was her natural pliability of character, that Mrs. Galton scarcely deemed even this antidote sufficient; and looked forward with trembling anxiety to the period of her being introduced to society, knowing how probable it was, that her fancy, and even her heart, might be seriously affected, long before her reason or understanding were called into action.

Selina was the only one of Sir Henry Seymour's children who had survived their mother; in her were centred all his hopes and nearly all his affections; her vivacity amused, and her talents gratified

him. But he was not capable of justly appreciating or fully comprehending her character; he had so long considered her as a mere child, it never entered into his calculation, that she was now approaching that eventful period of life, when more was required from the discretion and affection of a parent, than a mere tolerance of harmless vivacity. It did certainly sometimes occur to him, that she might marry, but he generally banished the idea from his mind as quickly as it arose; for it was always accompanied by a painful feeling, arising in truth from a dread of losing her delightful society; but he never analyzed this feeling, and always repeating to himself that she was still but a child, he concluded by his usual reflection, that there "was no use in thinking about it; for, if it was to happen, he could not help it."

Thus, with infatuated security, he anticipated no danger in allowing his daughter to associate with Augustus

Mordaunt. They had been brought up as children together, and their manner to each other was so unrestrained, so free from all those artificial precautions, that by a premature defence first apprise innocence of its danger, that even wiser heads than poor Sir Henry's might have believed, as Selina really did, that only the affection of brother and sister existed between them: it is true, Mrs. Galton and Mr. Temple sometimes talked over together the possibility of their future union; and so desirable did it seem to both, and so certain to obtain Sir Henry's consent, that they left them to their fate, scarcely wishing that any circumstance should arise to prevent a mutual attachment taking place.

Augustus was nephew to the earl of Osselstone, and heir to his title. His father, dying when he was four years old, had left him to the guardianship of Sir Henry; and the boy had been removed to Deane Hall the year before Selina was

born, where he had constantly resided since, except during the periods he had passed at Eton and Oxford. Sir Henry felt for him an affection almost paternal; nor was it unreturned, or unworthily bestowed. The disposition of Augustus was naturally benevolent and ardent in the extreme. Even in the most trifling pursuit either of knowledge or amusement, the fervency of his character was manifested; and where the susceptibility of his heart was once called forth, though expression might be repressed, his feelings were not easily to be subdued.

Mr. Temple, profiting by the example the fate of Mordaunt's parents had presented, early laboured to bring his passions under the control of reason. He succeeded in regulating them, though they were not to be extinguished; and though Augustus early acquired a habit of self-possession, yet the natural vivacity of his character was expressed in every glance of his intelligent countenance,

which served to portray each fleeting sentiment as it arose, whilst his dark expressive eye seemed to penetrate into the inmost thoughts of others, and to search for a mind congenial to his own. His figure was not less remarkable for elegance than strength; and he particularly excelled in all those manly exercises and accomplishments in which grace or activity are required. He had derived, partly from nature, partly from education, such high and almost chivalrous ideas of principle, that, even as a boy, no temptation could have induced him either to deserve or submit to the slightest imputation on his honour; and as he approached to manhood, this jealousy of character had given him a reputation of pride, which his dignified manner and appearance in some degree corroborated.—Though to his inferiors his address was always affable, yet to strangers of his own rank in life he was generally reserved: he was therefore not always understood; and those who

were incapable of fully comprehending his peculiar merits, frequently attributed that apparent haughtiness of demeanour, which repelled officious familiarity, less to the superiority of his individual character, than to the adventitious circumstance of his high birth and expectations.

He had early shown a strong predilection for the army, but he could never prevail on Sir Henry to consent to his entering that profession; and as a coolness existed between his uncle and his guardian, none other had yet been decided on for him. Nor, if it was to depend on Sir Henry's advice or exertions, was the selection likely soon to be made; for such was the habitual indolence of the baronet's character, that, unless the natural benevolence of his disposition was peculiarly called forth by any accidental circumstance, he was content with feelings of unbounded good will to all mankind, without making a single effort to promote the welfare of any individual.

Yet, nevertheless, he was an affectionate father, an indulgent landlord, a hospitable neighbour, a kind friend, and as such universally beloved and respected. In his establishment at Deane Hall, old English hospitality was maintained to the fullest extent; and the regularity of this establishment was united to such an uniformity of pursuit, that it almost amounted to a monotony of life. The care of directing his household and doing the honours of his table he left entirely to Mrs. Galton, the sister of the late Lady Seymour. She was, however, only called "mistress" by courtesy, for though "still in the sober charms of womanhood mature," just "verging on decay," she was yet unmarried. In her youth this lady had been as beautiful as she was amiable, and being possessed of a large fortune, had many suitors: on one of these, a Mr. Montague, she had bestowed her affections, and was on the point of marrying him, when she dis-

covered that he was an inveterate gamester, ruined in fortune, morals, and character, and of course unworthy of her regard; and though her good sense enabled her in time to recover from the misery this discovery occasioned her, yet she was never afterwards prevailed on to make another choice. Shortly after her refusal of him, Mr. Montague married a Miss Mortimer, who was as depraved as himself, and lost his life in a duel with one of his dissipated companions. Mrs. Galton had resided at Deane Hall from the period of her sister's death; and Selina soon filled the place of daughter in her affectionate heart. As that heart had been so deeply wounded, she had turned assiduously to the cultivation of her understanding; and in endeavouring to engraft her own perfections on Selina's ductile mind, she preserved the peace of her own, by withdrawing it from those corroding remembrances, that had threatened it with irreparable injury.

The day at last arrived, which was fixed for the annual visit of Mrs. Sullivan and her party at Deane Hall; for it may easily be supposed, that where such dissimilarity of character and pursuit existed, little intercourse would be maintained. At least an hour after the appointed time, the loud and peremptory knock of their London footman proclaimed their arrival; but their welcome was much less cordial, than it would otherwise have been, from all the assembled party at Deane, as they came unaccompanied by Miss Wildenheim.

Mrs. Sullivan, on entering the room, displayed a low, fat, vulgar figure, arrayed in all the shades admissible in fashionable *mourning*. Her gown was a *soi-disant* grey, approximating, as nearly as possible, to a sky blue, relieved with black and scarlet, and profusely ornamented with artificial flowers. On her head waved a plume of white ostrich feathers, which, in their modest color and airy form, served

perfectly to contrast her piony cheeks and lumpish person.

Her petticoats, wired at the bottom, kept unbroken the ample circle, of which her breadth from hip to hip formed the diameter. Her shuffling gait put all her finery in motion from head to foot; and Selina could not help thinking, that, "if she might just give her one *little* twirl," she would make to perfection what in her girlish plays was called a *cheese*. Mrs. Sullivan was followed by her two elder daughters—Miss Webberly, loaded with all the superfluous decorations of modern costume, which could be called in aid to conceal her natural deformity, and her sister, dressed in the opposite extreme of capricious fashion, equally solicitous to exhibit her all unobscured charms. Soon after, the entrance of the remaining guests completed the circle, and the company insensibly dividing into small separate parties, Mrs. Galton found herself between her two intimate friends, Mr.

and Mrs. Temple, and expressed to them her sincere regret at not seeing Miss Wildenheim, for whom Mrs. Sullivan had made an awkward apology.

"What a beautiful style of countenance hers is," said Augustus Mordaunt, who was standing by: "quite the Grecian head." "I look more to the inside of the head," replied Mr. Temple, "and find it as admirable as you do the outside." "You are always so warm in your admiration of your young favourite, that I am really quite jealous," said his amiable wife, with a look that expressed her love and pride in the speaker, and her regard for the object spoken of. "I do indeed admire her; nay, youthful as she is, I reverence her," resumed Mr. Temple. "And how did you happen to know so much of her?" asked Mrs. Galton; "for she has been carefully secluded from the rest of the neighbourhood."

"I was called upon to attend her in

my pastoral office last winter, during her dangerous illness; and having good reason to think that her pillow was unsmoothed by any kind hand, I pitied her most sincerely; and when we heard she was recovering, we both visited her frequently, and without much difficulty prevailed on Mrs. Sullivan, to permit her to come to the parsonage for change of air, where my ill-natured wife nursed her for six weeks." "I think," said Mrs. Temple, "one becomes better acquainted with a person in an invalide state, than in any other; the sort of charge that the healthy take upon them for the sick, entitles them to discard much of the formality of common intercourse." "You are right, my dear; and the being that is in hourly uncertainty of its stay here, is anxious to part with its fellow mortals, not only in peace, but in love; and receives every proffered kindness with gratitude. Impressed with these feelings," continued Mr. Temple, "Miss

Wildenheim suffered us to gain a knowledge of her disposition no other circumstance could have procured us.—To know and not to admire her is an impossibility!"

Mrs. Sullivan, who had kept herself aloof to impress on her mind an inventory of the furniture, and to listen to the whole company at once, could no longer keep patience or restrain her indignation; and having gathered sufficient to understand that Mr. and Mrs. Temple were praising her lovely ward, she exclaimed with involuntary vehemence, "Lauk! how can you admire Miss Wildenheim, with her sallow complexion, and such a poke?" "Pardon me, Mrs. Sullivan," replied Mrs. Galton; "the only time I ever met her I thought her complexion the most beautiful brunette I ever saw: but perhaps her colour was heightened by exercise." "And her carriage"—rejoined Mrs. Temple, with less ceremony, "is grace itself!" "*Et vera incessu patuit*

*Dea**"—said the worthy rector to Mordaunt; and, as he abhorred gossips, sheered off to the window, to ask him some questions regarding his studies at Oxford. "Well, well!" resumed Mrs. Sullivan, "I loves a girl as straight as the poplars at Islington, with a good white skin, (casting a look of triumph at Cecilia); I never liked none of them there outlandish folk: why she's for all the world like a gipsy. My poor dear Mr. Sullivan didn't ought for to bring his casts-up to me and my daughters, who are come of good havage!—If she and my Carline wasn't sisters, they never would be so out of the way fond of one another. If Miss was her natural mother, she couldn't make more of her than she does now, for her father's sake: and my foolish little chit thinks this Frenchified lady a nonsuch. I'll warrant

* And by her walk the queen of love is known.
DRYDEN.

me her schooling cost a pretty penny in foreign parts, where she got that odorous twang on her tongue; howsoever, she's culpable to teach my little girl to jabber French; and, as one good turn deserves another, I takes a world of pains to teach her not to misprison her words: and would you believe it? she looks sometimes as if she had a mind to laugh; and then she casts down her hugeous eyes, and colours up as red as a turkey cock, all out of pride! But I'm resolved she shan't ruinate Carline's English; I'll supersede that myself."

Dinner being announced, prevented Mrs. Sullivan's female auditors from making either comment or reply, except by an "alphabet of looks," which had this sapient lady possessed sufficient shrewdness to decipher, she would not have been much gratified by its import.

MAHARAJA SERFOGI'S SARASWATI

CHAPTER V.

Once on a time, so runs the fable,
A country mouse, right hospitable,
Received a town mouse at his board,
Just as a farmer would a lord.

POPE.

THE dessert was scarcely laid on the table and the servants withdrawn, when a clatter of pattens and a loud talking announced the arrival of the guests from Deane. Mrs. Galton and Miss Seymour were anxious to retire immediately; but Mrs. Sullivan was too busily engaged paying her devoirs to a fine peach, and her second daughter in monopolizing those of Mr. Mordaunt, to attend the signal; whilst Miss Webberly was slanderously attributing to the family of "Gases" affinities and products that never before had been hinted at; and was so eagerly bent on as-

tonishing Mr. Temple by a discourse "*Enflé de vent, vide de raison,*" that some minutes elapsed before the *debouching* was effected. They however reached the huge fire place, now decked in all the pride of summer's bloom, which marked the centre of the old-fashioned hall, before the finishing strokes were given to the toilets of the newly-arrived party. "I declare here they all come!" exclaimed Mrs. Martin; "Lucy, my dear, hold up your head. Here, put this pocket-handkerchief in your bonnet for night, whilst I just slip your shoes and stockings into your ridicule." "How d'ye do, Mrs. Galton? Thank ye, ma'am, my Lucy's used to walking—never catches cold. We were twice at Vauxhall last spring two year. Well certainly, Miss Seymour, the country air does agree with you; you look vastly well. Pray, my dear miss, isn't that Mrs. Sullivan and the two Miss Webberlys? They don't seem to remember me. I'll just go and ask whether the cur-

rant wine I made 'em a present of was good or not." So saying, the active Mrs. Martin bustled up to Mrs. Sullivan to recommence her usual string of queries, without waiting for an answer to any one of those she had already made with such uninterrupted volubility. But Mrs. Sullivan's pomposity was not to be discomposed by any sudden attack. She was by this time sitting, or rather reclining, (for reposing it could not be called) on the high backed, hard-bottomed, uncushioned, damask-covered sofa, which had not yet resigned its proud and ancient place against the side wall of Sir Henry's drawing-room. She was paying as much attention to Mrs. Galton's conversation as repeated yawns would permit, an attention ostentatiously redoubled at the entrance of Mrs. Martin, while Mrs. Lucas was balancing herself on the edge of an immoveable arm-chair, assiduously offering her assenting monosyllable, and smiling "he hem" at the close of every

sentence the two ladies uttered, however contradictory its import might be to the last expressed opinion.

Mrs. Temple had in the mean time joined the young people who had withdrawn to one of the deep recesses of the windows, collected together in a groupe, by that indescribable attraction which is found in a similarity of age, however unlike the characters or pursuits of the different individuals may be. Some beautiful roses which filled an old china vase, and scarcely rivalled its colours, served for the subject of their conversation. "I suppose," said Miss Webberley, "you have plenty of time, in this out of the way place, Miss Seymour, for the study of botany and the fine arts. How I envy you! Now in town we have never no time for nothing." "No, indeed," replied Miss Seymour, "I know nothing of botany, though I delight in flowers." "Not understand botany!" "Why indeed, my love Emily," interrupted Miss

Cecilia Webberly, "no person of taste likes those things now, they are quite out; indeed, 'the loves of the plants' is a delightful book, that will always go down. I have it almost off by heart. Don't you admire it, Miss Seymour?" "I have never read it," answered Selina. "And what do you read?" continued Cecilia; "I suppose you hardly ever get a new book at Slater's?" "Yes; do let us hear what your studies are," said Miss Webberly, in a tone approaching to contempt. "My employments scarcely deserve the name of studies," modestly replied Selina. "I am very fond of drawing, and spend a great deal of time in that occupation; but any information I receive from books has been principally gathered from what Augustus reads out to my aunt and me, whilst my father sleeps in an evening." "How extatic must be your communication with Mr. Temple, my dear madam!" said Miss Webberly, turning from Selina to Mrs.

Temple; "yours must be the feast of reason and the flow of soul. Does the vegetable creation ever attract your notice?" "Yes;" quietly answered Mrs. Temple; "but I principally cultivate flowers for the sake of my bees; they, you know, are my second nursery." "And pray, while you are practising horticulture, do you think you ever suffer from imbibing the hydrogen?" "To tell you the truth, my dear Miss Webberly, I feel I so little understand either hydrogen or oxygen, that I never think about them." "Nothing more easy! nothing more easy, I assure you! Every body learns chemistry in town. I always attend the Royal Institution;—Sir Humphrey Davy is so dear! so animated! so delightful! I once asked him, 'My dear Sir Davy,' says I, 'what's the distinction between oxygen and hydrogen?' 'Why,' says he, 'one is pure gin, and the other gin and water.'" Poor Selina was as little capable of enjoying the scientifical

jargon of Miss Webberly, as she was of comprehending the more fluent discourse of her sister, who had already talked over the contents of Slater's library with Miss Martin and Miss Lucas, and astonished them with a minute description of the last spring fashions. The arrival of the tea and coffee was therefore to her no unwelcome interruption.

But the occupations attending the tea-table were scarcely commenced, when the approach of Sir Henry Seymour from the dining-room was announced by the quickly repeated sound of his knotted cane, which kept due measure with his hurried footsteps along the well polished floor of the hall, as it preserved the worthy baronet from its slippery influence. "Why, Selina! Mrs. Galton! Selina!" exclaimed he, hastily opening the door, "Who is it? what is it? are there any more asked to day? have I forgot any one? bless my stars!" "What is the matter?" exclaimed both ladies at once.

"Matter!" quoth Sir Henry, "why a coach and four's the matter, and a man galloping like the devil up the long avenue is the matter. God forgive my swearing. Well, to be sure, that I should never have thought of them! Who can it be? I have certainly offended some of my neighbours! Good Lord!" The ladies had by this time thronged to the windows to see the unusual sight, except Miss Webberly, who affected to keep at a distance, though she could not refrain from peeping over their heads as she stood on tip-toe. At the same instant, all the family dogs joined in one chorus of welcome; and the equestrian, arriving at full speed, jumped off his horse, and pulling the door-bell with a vehemence it had seldom felt before, so electrified poor Sir Henry, that he almost unconsciously repaired with unpremeditated haste to the scene of action. "I say, old Square-toes," vociferated the stranger, "is this Harry Seymour's castle?" "Ye-e-s,"

answered its hospitable owner, whilst astonishment and indignation impeded his utterance. "Ye-es! why you look as queer as the castle spectre yourself. Well, send somebody for my horse, for here's my lord and lady; and, I say, order beds." Perhaps Sir Henry would in his turn equally have astonished his unexpected visitor, had not a sudden turn of the open barouche, as it approached the door, presented to his view the faces of Lord and Lady Eltondale. "Why, Gad's my life! Good Lord! Selina, here's your aunt! Good Lord! well to be sure!" The name of "aunt," a title that always called forth from Selina's affectionate heart sentiments of the tenderest gratitude and delight, acted like a talisman on the lovely girl, and brought her in an instant to the spot with sparkling eyes, glowing cheeks, and steps of fairy lightness; while Mrs. Galton, who better knew *the aunt* she was about to meet, advanced to offer a more sober, though not less polite reception.

From the side of the barouche next the door descended Lord Eltondale, with as much activity as his unwieldy body would permit, encumbered as it was by an immense bang-up coat, which, by a moderate computation of the specific gravity of like solids, would in all probability have increased the weight of the ponderous carcase it enclosed to nearly that of his Lordship's own prize ox. With much less alacrity his fair spouse prepared to alight; an open pelisse, wrapped in a thousand folds, partially concealed her yet beautiful figure, while an enormous London *rustic* bonnet, with the affectation of simplicity and the real stamp of fashion, equally disguised her face. During that time, Lord Eltondale, in no subdued tone of voice, was expressing his lively pleasure at meeting Sir Henry, almost dislocating Mrs. Galton's wrists with the fervency of salutation, and with no less zeal imprinting oscular proofs of satisfaction on the fair retiring cheek of

his niece. Lady Eltondale had full time to kiss her white hand in turn to each individual, to commit her smelling-bottle and work bag to the particular charge of the footman who had preceded them, and to descend leisurely from the carriage with apparent timidity, but real anxiety, to save her shawls, and exhibit her well-turned ancle to Mordaunt, who supported her faltering steps.

"Why, Gad's my life, I'm glad to see you all, though I never should have thought of it," exclaimed Sir Henry, his wig nearly as much turned round as the brains underneath it. "Why, Bell, what the devil brings you here?—Come to spend the summer, eh, with that chaise full of band boxes? Well, to be sure, to think of your coming to Deane Hall again! But I can't reach your mouth till you kick off that trumpet you've on."

"Good God!" exclaimed Lady Eltondale with an involuntary shudder, but instantaneously recovering herself, "I am quite

delighted, my dear brother, to find you in such charming spirits. How do, Mrs. Galton? I declare you look younger than ever. And Selina! why, child, you are almost as tall as I am." Selina's first impulse had been to throw herself into Lady Eltondale's arms, believing innocently that an "aunt" was another Mrs. Galton. But the boisterous *bonhomie* of the Viscount's compliments, and still more the fashionable frigidity of Lady Eltondale's address, were repulsive to her feelings, and she unconsciously withdrew to that part of the hall to which Mordaunt had retired, whilst a tear trembled on her long eye-lashes. "She is not at all like aunt Mary," said Selina in a half whisper, "I'm sure I shan't like her." "But she will surely like you, Selina," answered Mordaunt.—"Come, you foolish girl," continued he, taking her hand, "don't you know aunt Mary said this morning, you were almost old enough to do the honours yourself! Let us see your *coup*

d'essai." Meantime Sir Henry and Mrs. Galton led the travellers to the drawing-room, and introduced them to the wondering party they had left there.

Lady Eltondale returned their salutations with a sweeping reverence, between a bow and a curtsy, accompanied by one of her most fascinating smiles; and walking deliberately to the head of the room, "I am afraid, my dear Mrs. Galton, we have discomposed you;—we have arrived at an unseasonable moment," said her Ladyship in a voice of dulcet sweetness; though this demi-apology was accompanied by a look round the room, which plainly indicated that the fair speaker felt assured her arrival would at any time have discomposed *such* a company. "Well, Sir Henry," bellowed out Lord Eltondale, "how goes on the farm? I shall taste your beef admirably—I'm confoundedly hungry." "Hungry!—Beef!—Good Lord!—Bless my heart, haven't dined yet? Now I should never

have thought of that! Why, Selina! Mrs. Galton! Selina! do order something to be got ready directly. Bless my heart—not dined! why it's past seven o'clock! James! John! I say, Wilson!" "Pray, my dear brother," said the Viscountess, seating herself, "don't trouble yourself; a pâttié, a Maintenon, any thing will do for us." "Aye, aye, Sir Henry, give us a beef steak or a mutton chop; any thing will do for us, if there is but enough." Lady Eltondale's fragile form underwent that species of delicate convulsion, between a shudder of horror and a shrug of contempt, which was her usual commentary on her lord's speeches; and very calmly untying her bonnet, she threw it on a chair at some distance, and discovered a little French cap, from beneath which a glossy ringlet of jet black hair had strayed not quite unbidden. She then no less leisurely proceeded to slip from under her silken coat, of which young Webberly, with officious velocity, flew

to relieve her, though she still retained as many shawls as she could well dispose of in attitudinal drapery, without regarding the too apparent contrast they formed to the transparent summer clothing, which shaded, but scarcely hid her once perfect form. Mrs. Sullivan's impatience to be recognized would not suffer her to wait till the tedious ceremony of disrobing was finished; but finding her curtsies, and her nods, and her smiles, and her flutterings, had not yet procured her the notice she was so ambitious to obtain, she gave an audible preluding "hem!" and then addressed Lady Eltondale with "'Pon honour, my lady, I'm delighted to counter your ladyship. Your ladyship looks wastly vell. How is that 'ere pretty cretur, your Ladyship's monkey?" Lady Eltondale turning her head quickly round at the first sound of the sharp discordant voice that now assailed her ear, saw something so irresistibly attractive in the vessel of clay from which it proceeded, that

she found it impossible immediately to withdraw her eyes, and, taking up her glass, remained in total silence for some moments, examining the grotesque figure opposite to her, displayed as it was to particular advantage in the operation of opening and shutting a brilliant scarlet fan with accelerated motion. "Forgive me, my dear madam—I am quite ashamed; but really your name has escaped my recollection:—your person I should think impossible to forget." A polite inclination of an admirably turned head and neck concealed the sarcasm of this equivocal compliment. "To be sure, my lady," continued the gratified Mrs. Sullivan, "ve town ladies can't get our wisiting lists off book like primers, he! he! he!—Sulliwan, my lady, Sulliwan's my name, and them there two girls are my daughters, and that there——" "Indeed, Mrs. Silly-one, you do me much honour," interrupted her Ladyship. "Se-

lina, my love, I want to talk to you;—how goes on music?" "I think, Lady Eltondale," said Miss Cecilia Webberly, with assumed *nonchalance*, "the last time you and I were together was at the Lord Mayor's ball—a sweet girl that Lucy Nathin is!" "Brother, you must let La Fayette dress this dear girl's hair to-morrow; these ringlets will be *superbe* done *à la corbeille*." "Yes, my Lady, I quite agree with you, my Lady. All Miss Seymour vants is a little winishing and warnishing, as we hearties say. Her bodies ought to be cut down, my Lady, and her petticoats cut up, my Lady, and she would be quite another guess figure, my Lady. Six weeks in town would quite halter her hair and her mane; and as for music, Pinsheette's the man to improve her in vice." "Pucit-ta-a-a, mother!" screamed Cecilia, "can you ever learn that man's name?"

A most opportune summons to the

"beef-steak" relieved Lady Eltondale from the discussion, which was on the point of commencing between mother and daughter. She rose with an air of dignity, that immediately silenced both combatants; and, while she leaned on Sir Henry's offered arm, she drew Selina's through her own, and, turning to Mrs. Galton, said with a bewitching smile, "You must spare this Hebe to be my cup-bearer. I almost envy you having monopolized her so long, notwithstanding all she has gained by it." Mordaunt, who had hitherto stood aloof, now advanced to open the door for them, and smiled significantly to Selina as they passed; while Webberly, who had just sense enough to perceive the distance of Lady Eltondale's manner, called loudly for his mother's carriage. The rest of the party, who had hitherto remained in dumb astonishment, gladly took the hint, and began the tedious ceremony of curtsying, bidding good night, and packing

up; leaving Mrs. Galton at liberty to do the honours of the second dinner table, which lasted till nearly the hour when the good Baronet usually retired to rest.

CHAPTER VI.

> And all your wit—your most distinguished art,
> But makes us grieve you want an honest heart!
>
> BROWN.

LADY Eltondale was arrived at the meridian of life, and no longer boasted the charms of youth, "*Elle ne fut pas plus jolie; mais elle fut toujours belle:*" and perhaps the finished polish of her manners, and matured elegance of her person, were now scarcely less attractive than the loveliness of her earlier days had been: for beautiful she once was;

> "Grace was in all her steps—Heav'n in her eye,
> In all her gestures dignity:"

and, if "love" could have been added, she would have been, almost, faultless.—But a cold, selfish disposition blasted the

fair promise; it was, "a frost, a chilling frost," that withered every bud of virtue! And yet she was not absolutely wicked; she could not be accused of having a *bad* heart; it might rather be said she had no heart at all.—And with every other requisite to form perfection in a female character, this one defect neutralized all the bounteous gifts of nature—her very talents, like those of Prometheus, were perverted, and preyed on her own soul; whilst the aching void, left by the total absence of all the nameless charities of life, she had vainly endeavoured to fill up by a restless, endless passion for scheming, either for herself or others.—She would, perhaps, have shuddered at the thought of designedly laying a plan to undermine the happiness of another; yet such were the sophistical powers of her mind, that she seldom failed in sincerely persuading herself, that whatever plan she proposed to execute, was, in reality, the most desirable that could be adopted,—and, with

this conviction, she had scarcely ever been known to relinquish a project she had once formed, and seldom failed, either by art or perseverance, to obtain her end.

Her history was a very common one— Her father died while she was young, leaving her mother and herself a comfortable, though not a splendid provision, as all the landed property descended to her brother, Sir Henry Seymour, who was many years older than she was.

The dowager lady Seymour, a weak woman, but indulgent parent, was easily prevailed on by her lovely daughter, to choose London for her place of residence; and when Sir Henry married, their visits to Deane Hall, which had never been frequent entirely ceased. Miss Seymour meantime took every advantage of the opportunities her new line of life afforded. She cultivated with assiduity and success every brilliant accomplishment, and was

admired even more than her own vanity, and her mother's blind partiality, had taught her to expect. Her pretensions rose in proportion to her success; and at one time she fancied nothing less than a ducal coronet could render the chains of matrimony supportable. At last, however, after a thousand schemes and speculations, in a moment of pique, she accepted the title of viscountess, which was all Lord Eltondale had to offer, except a splendid temporary establishment; as nearly all his property was entailed on his son by a former marriage. Indeed, so dissimilar were their tastes, characters, and pursuits, that their union was a seven days' wonder; and would not, perhaps, ever have taken place, had not Miss Seymour, in the prosecution of a far different plan, at first unguardedly encouraged, or rather provoked, Lord Eltondale's addresses; and he, "good easy man," *had not time* to develope the cause of the flattering selection.

Lord Eltondale was one of those unoffending, undistinguished mortals, who would most probably have returned to his original clay unnoticed and unwept, had not fortune, in one of her most sportive moods, hung a coronet on his brow, and thus dragged the Cymon into observation. He possessed neither talents nor acquirements, and held "the harmless tenour of his way" in equal mean betwixt vice and virtue.

By nature he was a gourmand, and by fashion a farmer; for, strange to say, amongst the other changes this century has produced, not the least remarkable is the insatiable ambition of our peers to rival—not their ancestors—but their coachmen and ploughmen. But, even in the only science Lord Eltondale affected to understand, his learning was only superficial: he delighted in going through the whole farming vocabulary; could talk for hours of threshing machines, and drilling machines, and Scotch ploughs, and

bush harrows; particularly if he was so fortunate as to meet with an auditor, whose learning on those subjects did not transcend his own. He was also an inimitable judge of the peculiar merit of sheep and oxen, when they were transformed into beef and mutton: but of real useful agriculture, that art which is one of England's proudest boasts, he only knew enough to entitle him to imitate a clown in appearance, and to constitute him an honorary member of different farming societies; which, besides procuring him sundry good dinners, particularly suited the supineness of his disposition, by giving him an excuse, "*De ne rien faire, en toujours faisant des riens* *."

Such was the partner the lovely Miss Seymour chose for life; and as the death of her mother, and that of the only child she ever had, occurred before the expiration of the second year of her marriage,

* To do nothing in always doing nothings.

she was left without any tie to attach her to a domestic life; while her own conscious superiority to her lord deprived her of any support from him, which might have guided her, as she swam on the highest wave of fashion.

Sir Henry Seymour experienced at least as much surprise as pleasure, at such an unexpected visit from his sister and the viscount; but he did not suspect the object of it, till her ladyship herself explained it to him the following morning. Indeed the only motive that could have been strong enough, to induce her to return, even for a few hours, to a place she so much abhorred, was that which now had brought her; namely, an anxious desire to promote a marriage between Selina Seymour and her step-son, Mr. Elton. Lady Eltondale was well aware, that her extravagance, and her lord's indolence, had already swallowed up any ready money they had originally possessed, and that whenever the property came

into the hands of Frederick Elton, little, if any thing, would be left for her support, except what she should receive from his generosity; and therefore she had determined to secure for him one of the richest and loveliest brides England could offer, believing, that by so doing she should not only increase his power of being generous, but also establish her claims on his everlasting gratitude. It is true she was not certain, that such a step would ensure the happiness, or even meet the approbation of Frederick. On that point, strange as it may appear, Lady Eltondale had bestowed but little consideration, (self-interest being always paramount in her mind), as this plan would be certainly beneficial to herself, she determined to consider it equally advantageous to him. In fine, she had been the first to suggest it; she had long meditated on it, and at last resolved upon it: having thus made up her own mind, the difficulties which might occur in the pro-

secution of her scheme, if any should arise, would but make her more solicitous for its accomplishment.

At first Lady Eltondale found some little difficulty in persuading Sir Henry to accede to her proposal; not that he for a moment recollected the cruelty of engaging irrevocably his daughter's hand, before he even enquired into the state of her affections; or that he reflected on the danger of confiding a character so volatile as was Selina's to the guardianship of a young man they were both totally unacquainted with. Sir Henry only hesitated, from an unwillingness to part from her himself; for he was one of those fatally partial parents, who, prizing too highly their daughters' society, often sacrifice their happiness to that selfish consideration. But to every objection he could urge Lady Eltondale had some specious answer ready: she reminded him, that Mr. Elton was then abroad, and that his return might possibly be delayed for

some time; dwelt upon the excellence of his character; and finally, more by perseverance than argument, succeeded in obtaining Sir Henry's promise, that he would consent to their marriage taking place, as soon as Frederick returned from the continent. Lady Eltondale well understood that magic, which is the empire a strong mind exercises over a weaker; and had so well worked on all the springs of poor Sir Henry's, that he gave the required promise as explicitly as she demanded it; for she was well aware, that if once she prevailed on him to give such a promise, not even his deference to Mrs. Galton's opinion would induce him to break it. But as of the tendency of that opinion Lady Eltondale had a sort of presentiment, she wished to save herself the trouble of combating it; and therefore prevailed on her brother not to mention it during the short remainder of her stay at the Hall, on the pretence of sparing her "dear Selina's feelings;" and

as he was for many reasons not unwilling to dismiss the subject from his thoughts, he agreed to the required silence.

The evening of that day, which sealed Selina's destiny, passed over without any particular circumstance to mark its progress, save only that Lady Eltondale was even, if possible, more attractive than ever. She eminently possessed that "complaisance, which adopts the ideas of others as its own; and all that politeness, in fine, which perhaps is not virtue itself, yet is sometimes its captivating resemblance, which gives laws to self-love, and enables pride to pass every instant by the side of pride, without offending." This art she was in the daily habit of exercising towards all her associates; but to delude or flatter Mrs. Galton, Lady Eltondale always felt, was a task of no small difficulty. Her penetration and her modesty were both too great to be easily evaded; and her character was composed of such delicate tints, blended

insensibly into so admirable a whole, that to bring forward only one part seemed to destroy that unity, which constituted its perfection. Besides, Mrs. Galton was so true, so simple, in all she said, and thought, and did, that she seemed sanctified by her own purity: and though the artful viscountess could not feel all the beauty of such a mind, its very greatness, unadorned as it was, impressed her with an awe so unusual, that the stranger feeling degenerated into repugnance and distrust. Yet even to her her manner on the eventful night was complaisant in the extreme—to Sir Henry it was affectionate, to Selina indulgent; and to Mordaunt a veil of tempered coquetry gave a dazzling attraction to all her words, looks, and actions. In her intercourse with him, she chose to avail herself of all the privileges she could derive from her seniority; while the fascinations of her wit, the elegance of her manner, and the

real beauty of her person, gave her a dangerous power over an unpractised heart, which the artless charms of inexperienced youth dared not have used, and could scarcely have possessed. Little aware were the innocent members of the circle she was delighting, that her increased animation and her improved charms arose from the glow of conscious pride, as she triumphantly reflected on the success of her scheme; a scheme which, nevertheless, she had sufficient penetration to discover, would blight the fairest prospects of those she appeared most sedulous to please; and which might destroy for ever the happiness of a scene, that, till the moment of her intrusion, had bloomed another Paradise.

CHAPTER VII.

Ah! gentle pair, ye little think, how nigh
Your change approaches, when all these delights
Will vanish, and deliver ye to wo,
More wo, the more your taste is now of joy!

PARADISE LOST.

THE next morning, notwithstanding its being Sunday, was fixed for the departure of the Eltondales for Cheltenham; as, in addition to Lady Eltondale's dread of passing a Sunday evening at the Hall, the hallowed day was one usually set apart by her and her obedient lord for travelling.

The whole of Sir Henry's household, unused to such an appropriation of the Sabbath, was thrown into disorder. The arrival of the post horses; the bustle and importance of the servants who were

departing, with the confusion of those who were to remain; the enumeration of the packages by Madame La Fayette, who was, if possible, a finer lady than her mistress; and the awkward, and perhaps not quite unintentional, mistakes of her aides-de-camp the house-maids, in their arrangement, presented altogether a scene of clamour that totally dismayed poor quiet Sir Henry: and even Mrs. Galton could scarcely refrain from expressing a part of her discomposure, at perceiving the slow progress, that was actually making in the work of preparation, would effectually prevent either the domestics or themselves joining their worthy pastor in his public worship. At last Lady Eltondale appeared, to partake of what she called the early breakfast; and before this affair, always so important to the Viscount, was concluded, the different forms of farewell had been gone through, and the last part of the train had fairly moved from the door, the greatest portion

of the morning was elapsed. Selina stood at the library window, watching the rapid motion of the carriages, and the spirited action of the postilions; as, cracking their whips over the horses' heads, they turned out of the long avenue, and disappeared down the hill. She listened for some time, involuntarily wishing to hear again the sound of the carriage wheels; then turning suddenly round, and casting her eye hastily over the dark damask hangings and massy furniture of the room, wondered why she had never before seen it look so gloomy as it now appeared. Mrs. Galton, who had silently marked the changes of that countenance, which so eloquently depicted every passing idea, now abruptly asked her, what she had been thinking of. Selina started and colored. But, as yet, she had never been conscious of a thought she would not wish to own; and, with her usual ingenuousness, replied—"I wonder, Aunt, what sort of place Cheltenham is? How

I should like to go there!"—"I dare say, Lady Eltondale would gladly have taken you there, Selina," replied Mrs. Galton, with a look of sadness, blended with anxiety.—"But you don't think, surely, I should like to leave you and Papa behind?—no; if you, and Papa, and Augustus, would all come with me, I should be delighted to go! but not else." So saying, she threw her polished arms round Mrs. Galton's neck, and kissing her cheek with an effusion of affection, gave a gratifying and unequivocal proof of the sincerity of her assertion.

Meantime, Sir Henry had strolled out, leaning on the arm of Augustus: at last, after a silence unusually prolonged, the Baronet exclaimed, "Good Lord! bless my heart, who would have thought, this day se'ennight, that Bell and Lord Eltondale would have been come and gone again by this time?"—"She must have been very beautiful," returned Mordaunt. "Aye, she was once very handsome in-

deed," replied Sir Henry.—" Bless my heart, how time passes on! I remember the winter she was presented at Court, how much she was admired! and good Lord! how things come about: every body said she was to have been married to your uncle, Lord Osselstone, though, I believe, there was never any truth in the report. That was the very year you were born, Augustus, two-and-twenty years ago, last Michaelmas. I have never been in London since; and, please God, never shall!" Augustus had attended more to his own thoughts, than to Sir Henry's observations; and would perhaps have continued his reverie, had not the old man's silence had the effect of rousing him, which his conversation had not. " I think," said he, at last, " Selina is very like her aunt: her eyes, to be sure, sparkle more, and her countenance is more animated, but her figure is nearly the same, if she were but a very little taller."—" Aye," returned Sir

Henry, with a sigh, "Selina will grow a great deal yet, I dare say.—Well, to be sure, who would have thought it? Bless my heart, she was but a child the other day: and then," he added, after a few moment's pause, "I wonder what sort of a chap that Frederick Elton is? I wonder will he like to play backgammon with me of an evening, as Selina does? Poor girl! he mustn't think of taking her to London, it would be the death of me, God help me!"

"Frederick Elton!" rejoined Augustus, "Good God, sir! what do you mean?"

"Aye, Augustus, I thought you would be surprised. Bless my heart! why, I never should have thought of it myself. Do you know, Bell and Lord Eltondale came all this way out of their road to ask my consent to Selina's marrying his son Frederick Elton? It was very kind of them to think of it, to be sure; but I had rather they hadn't troubled themselves."

"Well, sir, well surely, Sir Henry, you

didn't give it ?" "Bless my heart! well, to be sure, what makes you stare so ?—to be sure I gave it. What had I to say against the young man ? and Bell told me he would always like to live here." "And Selina, Miss Seymour, has given her consent too ?" "Oh, poor child! she knows nothing about it yet ;—I have'nt told her a word of it.—But what makes you shiver so ? Are you cold ? Why, Augustus, boy, you look as pale as ashes! Good Lord !—Bless my heart, what's the matter with you ?" "Nothing, sir, I've only a confounded head-ache, which a ride will cure." So saying, he turned abruptly from Sir Henry, who had by this time reached the hall door, and resumed his knotty cane. "Good Lord! well to be sure, he's not half so happy about it as I expected he would have been. I wonder what Mrs. Galton will say." And the doubt of the possibility of her not approving the plan, as he knew she was not partial to Lady Eltondale's plans in

general, made him at first hesitate about informing her. But the habit he had acquired of consulting her on all occasions, and a certain restless anxiety, which persons of weak minds always feel to have their opinions or actions sanctioned by others, at last preponderated; and he retired to his study, after sending to request to speak to Mrs. Galton, fortifying himself, previous to her appearance, with as many of Lady Eltondale's arguments as he could recal to his disturbed memory.

Mrs. Galton was not as entirely unprepared for the communication as poor Augustus had been. She knew enough of Lady Eltondale's character to surmise, that her sudden re-appearance at Deane Hall could neither have been unpremeditated or without design; and, from some hints which Lady Eltondale had casually dropped in the course of conversation, her penetration had led her to form some tolerably accurate surmises on the subject. When, therefore, she entered the

study, she was more grieved than surprised at the looks of painful emotion, with which Sir Henry received her. The poor old man, embarrassed with his own thoughts, began with more circumlocution than explicitness, to relate the circumstances, and ended a most perplexed speech by abruptly informing Mrs. Galton of the proposal. "It is as I expected," calmly replied she. "Aye! aye!" exclaimed the delighted Baronet, "I knew if any one would guess it you would.—I should never have thought of it myself." "But have you given your consent, Sir Henry?" "Given my consent?—Good Lord! what do you mean! Well to be sure, all the world's run mad to-day, I think! Why, bless my heart! didn't you say it was what you expected?" "I could not expect, my dear sir, that you would give your consent to any proposal on which the future happiness of Selina's whole life depends, without deliberation, and a proper understanding and

consideration of her feelings on the subject." "But, good Lord! I tell you again I *have* given my consent." "Not irrevocably, I hope, Sir Henry; you know nothing of Mr. Elton's character, taste, or disposition; you know nothing.—" "God forgive me for being in a passion," intertupted Sir Henry, "but the perverseness of women is enough to provoke a saint, which, the Lord help me, I'm not.—But you know, Mrs. Galton," continued he, in a more moderate tone, "you know Frederic Elton is a connection of our own;—and as for our not being acquainted with him —don't you remember he came here from school one Easter holidays, and gave Selina the measles by the same token, poor child!" "Forgive me, Sir Henry," calmly replied Mrs. Galton, "but I do not think that is knowing him well enough to decide on his title to Selina's esteem; and, believe me, that dear girl will never be happy unless she marries a

man she not only esteems but loves." "Well, and didn't Lady Eltondale tell me Selina would certainly love Frederic Elton? She says he is twice as handsome as Augustus Mordaunt; which, good Lord! is unnecessary, for Augustus, poor boy, is as fine a young man as ever I saw in my life." "Aye, poor Augustus!" sorrowfully exclaimed Mrs. Galton, "he would indeed have been happy with Selina, and God knows, he is the character that of all others would best have suited her." "Augustus Mordaunt, Mrs. Galton! Well to be sure! Good Lord! who would have thought of that! However, poor boy, though I don't give him Selina, I'll take care to give him something else—he shall never be dependent on that old uncle of his."

Mrs. Galton saw it was in vain to contend at that moment with the Baronet, who was fully convinced that his promise was irrevocable, and that after all it was

the best thing he could do, for Bell had told him so. All that Mrs. Galton could procure was a promise no less positive, that he would not give Selina the most distant hint of the project, by which she hoped not only to prolong her present days of peace, but also faintly flattered herself, that something might occur to prevent their union, between then and the time of Mr. Elton's return from abroad.

In the mean time Augustus prosecuted his useless ride—

> "Il va monter en cheval pour bannir son ennui,
> "Le chagrin monte en croupe et galoppe après
> lui."

Finding solitary reflection rather increased than cured his malady, he at last determined to open his heart to his reverend friend, Mr. Temple; and, alighting at the parsonage, sent his servant back to the hall, to say he should not return to dinner—an intimation which considerably

increased the gloom which pervaded the countenance of each individual of the trio, that was seated in silence round the dinner-table. Sir Henry and Mrs. Galton were each occupied by their own reflections; and Selina felt depressed, not only by the unusual absence of Augustus, but also from the effects of that vacuum, which the departure of guests, however few in number, always makes in a country house. After dinner she strolled listlessly from one room to another; took up and laid down, alternately, all the books that lay on the library table; sauntered to the harpsichord, and played parts of several anthems, without finishing any, and stopping every five minutes, in the vain belief that she heard the trampling of Mordaunt's horse. At last, at an hour long before her usual bed-time, she retired to her room, wondering what could keep him so late, and thinking she had never spent so long, so tiresome an evening; whilst she involuntarily

contrasted it with the hours winged on swiftest pinions, which the fascinations of Lady Eltondale's manners had so delightfully beguiled the night before.

CHAPTER VIII.

——— Men
Can counsel and give comfort to that grief,
Which they themselves not feel.
MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING.

AUGUSTUS met with his usual kind reception at the parsonage; nor was it long before he found the opportunity he wished of consulting his earliest and most revered friend; for Mrs. Temple quickly perceived, that something hung heavy on the bosom of this young man, whom she loved almost as a son, and therefore soon retired from the dinner-table, leaving the two gentlemen *tête à tête*, believing that he would find as much comfort as she ever did, from conversing freely with him who was "her guide, her head;" for, like our first parents, they

lived, "he for God only, she for God in him."

No sooner did Augustus find himself alone with Mr. Temple, than his oppressed heart found a ready vent, and he poured into the sympathetic ear of his reverend auditor a full detail of all his feelings. He had first discovered how ardently he loved Selina, at the moment he had learned she was destined for another; and he described, with all the eloquence of passion, the agony, the despair he now experienced. Mr. Temple had not yet forgotten what it was to love; and, "though time had thinn'd his flowing hair," his feelings had not yet become torpid under its benumbing influence. He could listen with patience, and even pity, to the wild effusions of his favourite's grief, while he waited calmly till the first burst of passion should subside, and leave room for the exercise of sober reason.—"Come, come, my dear Augustus," said he, at last, "your case is neither a

singular nor a desperate one: there are very few young men of your age, that do not fancy themselves as deeply in love as you do now, and, of the number, not one in five hundred marry the object of their first choice: indeed it is often very fortunate for them they do not."—" But Selina Seymour! where is such another woman to be found?" exclaimed Augustus: and then, with all a lover's vehemence, did he expatiate on her " matchless charms." " I grant you," replied Mr. Temple, " she is a very delightful girl; and, as far as we can judge, is likely to make a most estimable woman. But you know her disposition is naturally volatile in the extreme, and much of her future character will depend on her future guides. Well, well, we will not dispute on the degree of her merits," continued Mr. Temple, seeing Mordaunt ready to take up the gauntlet in her defence;—" hear me only with calmness, and I will promise to confine my observations as

much as I can to yourself. You know, my dear boy, you are yet very young, and very inexperienced. It is true you have been three years at Oxford. But of the world you may literally be said to know nothing. Selina is now certainly the most charming woman you have yet seen ; but how can you be sure she will always hold her pre-eminence in your estimation? Aye, my dear fellow, you need not tell me ;—I know you are at this moment perfectly convinced of your own inviolable constancy, and so forth. But let me tell you, you do not yourself know yet what would, and what would not, constitute your happiness in a wedded life. The girl, whose vivacity and animation we delight in at seventeen, may turn out a frivolous and even contemptible character at seven and twenty. And can you picture to yourself a greater calamity, than being obliged to drag on the lengthened chain of existence with a companion, to whose fate yours is linked

for ever, without one tone of feeling in unison with yours; to whom your pleasures and your griefs are alike unknown, or, if known, never comprehended; and where every misery is aggravated by a certainty that your fate is irremediable—when

'Life nothing brighter or darker can bring;'

when

'Joy has no balm, and affliction no sting?'

"It is very true that you think now, because Selina's pursuits have hitherto been similar to yours, that her character must likewise be in sympathy with yours. But, though I grant that it appears so now, I deny that it is in any way so formed as to be safely depended on. She is very young and very docile; and, believe me, her disposition, chameleon-like, will, most probably, take the shade of whomsoever she associates with:—'*Dimmi con chi*

vai, e vi diso quel che fai.*' You say, if you were her husband you would be her guide ; and that similitude of character, now faintly traced, would be confirmed for ever. But without dwelling on the argument, that your own is yet scarcely formed, let me remind you, that Selina is even still more ignorant of the world than yourself. Let me ask you, even in this moment of unrestrained passion, would you consent to accept that dear innocent girl's hand, without a certainty that with it you received her heart ? And how could you be certain of her affection, till time and experience, by maturing her judgment, had confirmed her feelings ? How, Augustus, would you support the conviction, nay the bare suspicion, that when, as your wife, you first introduced her to that world from which she has hitherto lived so totally secluded, she

* Tell me with whom she goes, and I'll tell you what she does.

should meet with another, whom she even thought she could have preferred to you; and, while you continued to gaze on her with the eye of tenderest love, you found your heart's warm offering received with the cold petrifying glance of indifference? You shudder at the very thought. Think, then, how the arrow that wounded you would be doubly sharpened, if the slanderous tooth of envy galled your fair fame, by accusing you of having secured to yourself Sir Henry Seymour's property by marrying his heiress, before the poor girl was old enough to judge for herself. What, then, my dear boy," said Mr. Temple, grasping his hand with a fervour almost paternal, whilst his eyes swam in tears, "What, then, Augustus, is the result of these observations, more painful to me to make than to you to hear? You acknowledge you would not even wish to marry Selina under these existing circumstances. What then is your misery? Look at it boldly in the face; and, trust

me, few are the anticipated evils of life, which, by being steadily gazed at, do not dwindle into insignificance. Lord Eltondale has proposed his son to be Miss Seymour's husband; and the match is sufficiently desirable, in a worldly point of view, to obtain Sir Henry Seymour's consent. But Selina, you say, knows nothing of it yet, and has never seen Mr. Elton. What then does it all come to? Why, when she does see him, if she does not like him, do you think her father would force her to marry him? and if she should like him, would you accept her hand, even if it were offered to you?"

Mr. Temple had not so long continued his discourse without frequent interruptions from Augustus, who could not at first easily be persuaded to assent to assertions, which tended to destroy the fairy dream of bliss that floated in his imagination. By degrees, however, as his judgment cooled, he acceded to the plain but severe truths which Mr. Temple uttered;

while the deference and regard, which his pupil had always felt for the excellent old man, served still more effectually to obtain the conviction he aimed at, than even the logical strength of his reasoning.

By degrees, Mordaunt not only confessed the truth of his remarks, but submitted to the wise plan of conduct, which Mr. Temple laid down for him.

He proposed that Augustus should immediately leave the hall, and return to the prosecution of his studies at Oxford, leaving to time not only the development of Selina's character, but also the proof of to what extent he was actually attached to her.

Their conversation was prolonged to a late hour; and when Mordaunt returned home, the family had all retired to rest, and the door was opened by a servant, who, at the same time, shaded with his hand the glimmering candle, which but partially illuminated the darkly wainscotted hall. Augustus felt a chill creep

through his veins as he quickly traversed it; and walking mechanically into the empty drawing-room, stopped a few minutes in melancholy silence. The music Selina had been playing was carelessly strewed over the harpsichord; the sermon book, in which Mrs. Galton had been reading, was laid open on the table; and Sir Henry's knotted cane had fallen down beside the chair, in which he usually took his evening nap. A sort of involuntary reflection passed through the mind of Augustus, that he might never again meet those three beloved individuals in that room, which had hitherto been to him the scene of his happiest hours; and shrinking from the melancholy train of ideas which this reflection gave birth to, he hastily retired to his room, though not to rest. Many a time, during that wakeful night, did the same reflection cross his mind; and many a time, in his future life, did it recur to his recollection with a poignant force. So often does it hap-

pen that melancholy fancies, occasioned in the mind by the temporary pressure of sorrow, are recalled to the memory by subsequent events, and, dignified by the accidental confirmation of casual circumstances, receive the name of *prophetic warnings.*

TANJORE MAHARAJA SERFOGI'S SARASWATI MAHAL.

CHAPTER IX.

Sneer.—True; but I think you manage ill: for there certainly appears no reason why Mr. Walter should be so communicative.

Puff.—For, egad now, that is one of the most ungrateful observations I ever heard;—for the less inducement he has to tell all this, the more I think you ought to be obliged to him; for I am sure you'd know nothing of the matter without it.

Dangle.—That's very true, upon my word.

THE CRITIC.

AUGUSTUS rose next morning at the first dawn of light; and, anxious to avoid seeing Selina, whilst agitated by the unhappy feelings that had now taken possession of his mind, left the hall before any of the family were up, and in a short note, excused the abruptness of his departure, by informing Sir Henry, that he had the evening before received at the

village a letter, to inform him that his Oxford friends had set out on their long promised excursion to the lakes.

Selina, though totally unconscious of the real cause of his absence, felt it with unusual acuteness, which Mrs. Galton remarked with regret, and for some time vainly endeavoured to turn her thoughts into their usual channel. At length they were in some degree diverted by the arrival of a letter from Lady Eltondale to Sir Henry, enclosing one from Frederick Elton to his father; for Sir Henry's noble sister was fully aware, that it was adviseable to remind him, from time to time, of the existence of this young man, that such reminiscence might refresh his memory as to his promise respecting him.

Mr. Elton had been three years abroad, during which time he had kept up a constant though not very confidential correspondence with his father; for, dreading Lady Eltondale's satire, and knowing she was in the habit of reading

all his letters, he pictured to himself her smile of contempt, or shrug of pity, at what she would term his romance, with a repugnance he could not summon resolution to encounter: so that, though his colloquial intercourse with his father was that of the most perfect confidence, his written communications might have been posted on a gateway, without the smallest detriment to his prospects in life. But, as he thus felt himself debarred of the happiness of expressing, without reserve, to his first and best friend, all his feelings and wishes, he endeavoured to console himself for this deprivation, by a most undisguised correspondence with a Mr. Sedley, with whom he had formed a friendship during their academical course in the university of Cambridge, where they had both been honourably distinguished.

About twelve months before Lady Eltondale's visit to Deane Hall, Mr. Sedley had received the first of the following

letters, and seven months after its arrival the two latter, though of different dates, reached him on the same day: of course they did not meet the eye of the viscountess, so that she remained ignorant of their contents; but even had she known them entirely, no consideration for Frederick's *happiness* would for an instant have caused her to waver in her plan for promoting his *prosperity*, as on the fulfilment of her long meditated scheme for this purpose depended the possibility of her future continuance in the London world.

MR. ELTON, TO CHARLES SEDLEY, ESQ.

Catania, January 9. ——

IF you have received the various letters I have written to you, my dear Sedley, since I left England, you are perfectly *au fait* of all my rambles; and of my perils, and "hair-breadth 'scapes" by

sea and by land, beginning with a shipwreck on the island of Rhodes, and ending with the dangers I encountered in paying my compliments to the Dey of Algiers: if not I must refer you to my note book, as a twice told tale is still more tedious to the relater than to the hearer. You must not be incredulous, if said manuscript should contain many wonderful adventures; but I have met with something more rare, more "passing strange," than all the marvels it describes: a woman I *can* love! nay, that, for my very soul, I could not help loving if I would; and, to say truth, at present I do not wish to make the experiment.

You see, Sedley, you were in the main no bad prophet. When we were together, I forswore all womankind in the way of matrimony, because I was disgusted with the manœuvres of title-hunting mamas, and the *agaceries* of their varnished daughters, who have little dis-

tinction but name, and nothing to guide a selection in the mass of resemblance—nothing to mark their identity—except a scruple, more or less, of folly or coquetry! Now don't plume yourself too much on your penetration; you were not altogether right, it was not the Gallic "*Erycina ridens, quam Jocus circumvolat et Cupido* *," who captivated me.—Man seeks in man his fellow, but in woman his contrary; and I am too volatile to be touched by a creature as thoughtless as myself. I should not say as *thoughtless*, but as *gay*; for their heads are continually filled with schemes to excite admiration, or ensure conquest: besides, the Parisian belle is only the more spirited original, of which our own girl of fashion is the elegant but insipid translation. Having told you those I do *not* like, it is time to give you a faint, a very faint, idea of her

* Laughing Venus, encircled by Love and Joy.

I *do* admire.—But let me go on regularly, and tell you first how I happened to meet with her.

At Palermo there is a very numerous, if not good society, made up of shreds and patches of the staple manufacture of all nations, but principally of the English produce. You know, it is my practice to profit, when abroad, by that of whatever country I may happen to be in, as our own is to be had better and at a cheaper rate at home. Impressed with this idea, I procured some introductions to the principal nobility of this enchanting place, where, I understood, there was a delightful native society, and the gentlemanly amusements of drinking and gambling (the only ones to be found at Palermo and Messina) were nearly superseded by those afforded by music, dancing, and literary conversation. I have not been disappointed; and if you should ever come to Sicily, I advise you to take up your abode here, and I will

introduce you to all my acquaintance, with *one* exception. About four months ago, I found myself, one evening, at the Marchese Di Rosalba's, listening to some exquisite music: I was as melancholy as a poet in love, for "I am never merry when I hear sweet music;" when my eyes happened to rest on a lady, whose image will never leave my mind.

From the looks of the gentleman who accompanied her, I soon discovered that the fair creature, who rested on his arm, was his daughter. In his face was a strangely mingled expression of habitual care, and present pleasure; his forehead was furrowed in a thousand wrinkles, and the feverish glare of his eye spoke a mind ill at ease: but when he turned to his daughter, to point out to her notice, in the tacit language of the eye, any beautiful passage in the music, he looked like a saint raised from his penance by a vision of celestial nature. Her countenance formed the most perfect contrast

to his; it was the abode of peace, which seemed to repose in her eye; her whole outline of face and form was so perfect, that a sculptor might have taken her as a model for the statue that Pygmalion worshipped; and, like him, I longed to see the beauteous image waken to incipient thought—I was not long ungratified—its apparent absence was only the effect of the music, which, (to use her own expresion) "*fait tout rêver et ne rien penser.*" When she joined in conversation her ever varying countenance resembled a mirror, which transmits to our eye every passing image, (though the polished surface is itself unmasked by any), and, like it, owing its animation to the strong reflecting power gained from within. I could not decide then, and I cannot tell you even now, whether I most admire the angelic placidity of her countenance when silent, or its luminous brilliancy, when her ideas and feelings are called forth in interesting conversation.

At such moments the brightness of her soul is reflected in her eyes, and the lambent flame, which then plays in them, seems, like the summer's lightning, to open a Heaven to our view.

You will easily suppose I lost no time in introducing myself to her notice: she received my attentions in the most unembarrassed manner—not courting—not repulsing them, but seeming to consider them as justly due to her sex, and her rank in society. These attentions I have not ceased to pay at every possible opportunity since that delightful evening, and my admiration grows stronger every day. I find her conversation truly charming; and I devoutly believe it would be so were she externally the reverse of what she is; for, in speaking, "she makes one forget every thing—even her own beauty." She has not found out, that her extensive knowledge is any thing to be ashamed of. But, poor thing! a short residence in England

would teach her that! She neither conceals nor displays her acquirements. The stream of thought, in *her* mind, flows, not like the little mountain torrent, swelled by accidental rains, exceeding every bound, and defacing the fair soil it should adorn; but, like the fertilizing river,

> "Though deep yet clear, though gentle yet not dull,
> Strong without rage, without o'erflowing full."

In the beginning of our acquaintance we conversed in Italian, but as I was not very fluent, she politely adopted the French language as the circulating medium of our commerce, and I was half sorry for it; for besides the beauty of Italian in her mouth, her good-natured smile, when I eked out my scanty stock with a word or two of Latin, pleased me better than all the rest, it was so encouragingly kind, so *untutored!*

I soon found out she had a quick sense

of the ridiculous, but only because sharp-sighted people cannot go through the world with their eyes shut. She forbears, from the benevolence of her heart, to use the powers of ridicule her penetration furnishes her with; and I admire her the more for having at command an arsenal of wit, with so many polished weapons unused. We are always attached to the generous enemy, who can strike, but spares!

I have been so delighted with the employment of defining to myself, for the first time, my ideas of the object of my admiration, that (pardon me, my dear Sedley) I quite forgot they were to be read by another; and, perhaps, should have gone on till to-morrow, had not my servant, coming to inquire if my letters were ready to be conveyed to the ship which is to carry them to England, roused me from my soliloquy, (if you will permit me to extend this expression to writing).

I would not display the amulet, which guards my heart by its potent charm, to any eye but yours; but I cannot, even in this instance, depart from my usual habit of confidence in you; therefore, here goes my unread rhapsody.

Yours, dear Sedley, ever truly,

FREDERICK ELTON.

TO CHARLES SEDLEY, ESQUIRE.

Catania, March 5, ——

My dear Sedley,

ABOUT two months ago I sent you my confession, which you have no doubt received and answered, ere this. It was no sooner gone than I repented I had sent it, thinking it would have been wiser to endeavour to restrain my perhaps unrequited passion, than to run the risk of confirming it, by imparting it to another. This was only the escort of a long train of reflections, which ended in

a resolution to leave Catania immediately; and in order to divert my mind from the train of thought that had seized it, I resolved to visit Mount Etna, in company with a party of Savans, assembled for that purpose at this place. We had all the *de quoi* for a most amusing excursion, men of real science and literature, and still more entertaining pretenders to both; amongst the latter I held a distinguished rank, for in my zeal to acquire the "hardest science," *ere* "taught a lover yet," I mistook one mineral for another, and miscalled every plant I met; indeed, I might give you a long list of similar blunders, that raised many a learned shoulder and eyebrow to the altitude of contemptuous surprise!

After the descent from the mountain, I insensibly separated myself from all the party, whose weak senses I had so much astonished; and wandering about the exquisite scenery at the base of Etna,

I was more than ever possessed by feelings I had endeavoured to stifle;

Pour chasser de sa souvenance
  L'objet qui plait,
On se donne tant de souffrance,
  Pour si peu d'effet!
Une si douce fantaisie,
  Toujours revient,
Et en songeant qu'on doit l'oublier,
  On s'en souvient *.

So to make a long story short, here I am again at Catania, for the purpose of making myself quite sure, that Adelina is as charming as my imagination has depicted her. I really don't think she is, for I certainly did not love her half so much when I was

* From mem'ry's length'ning chain to part
  The object that we love,
How vain the pang that rends the heart,
  What fruitless grief we prove!
The dear idea, cherish'd yet,
  Returns still o'er and o'er,
And thinking that we should forget,
  Impresses it the more.

with her as I do now; perhaps my *mind* was so much amused by her conversation, that little room was left for the expansion of the *feelings*; but they are unrestrained in absence, and its melancholy regrets are, I verily believe, more powerful than the most potent present charm. If Adelina is the superior character I take her for, I see no one good reason why she should not be my wife: I have, on considering the matter more maturely, put to flight the phantoms I had raised previous to my departure from this place.

My father, when twice my age, (with therefore half the excuse) married for love, therefore why should not I?

I am sure he will give me no opposition, for he has always been a most indulgent parent, and on a point where my happiness is so much concerned, I feel convinced my wishes would be his. Whenever he has, on points of minor importance, wavered in the least, my charm-

ing step-dame has always used her influence, to decide him in my favour, therefore I am certain of her support. Indeed what can my father object to in Adelina? He cannot surely want fortune for me? I do not know whether Adelina is or is not possessed of this root of all evil, but if she is not, it is the only want she can possibly have.

But all this is for an after-thought, the preamble must be to gain Adelina's consent: she has shown me no particular preference as yet, but I am determined to think she will not withhold it; *Qui timidè rogat docet negare* *, and the conviction of the success of our plans so often ensures it!

With these hopes I am now as happy as I was miserable a short time ago. What fools we are to throw away the bliss we might enjoy, at the suggestions of that preposterous prudence, that leads

* Who timidly asks teaches to deny.

us to seek for flaws in the short leases of happiness that are granted to us, and which, after all, when they expire are renewable at pleasure, if we would but pay the necessary fine, by sacrificing our proud splenetic discontents. Hypochondriac spirits may say as they like; but I will maintain, that to those who make the best of it, this is a very delightful world!

The Marchese di Rosalba has promised to take me to-morrow to the Villa Marinella, where Adelina always goes with her father in the beginning of spring. I shall establish my head quarters within two or three miles of it at Aci reale, through which flows the river immortalized by the loves of Acis and Galatea; and if my Galatea should prove equally kind, no mental or corporeal giant shall destroy our happiness.

Ever yours, dear Sedley,

FREDERICK ELTON.

CHAPTER X.

—— He says he loves my daughter,
I think so too: for never gaz'd the moon
Upon the water, as he'll stand and read
As t'were, my daughter's eyes: and to be plain,
I think there is not half a kiss to choose,
Who loves another best.
If young Doricles
Do marry with her, she'll bring him that
Which he not dreams of.

SHAKESPEARE.

MR. ELTON TO CHARLES SEDLEY, ESQ.

Aci reale, July 15, ——

My dear Sedley,

I BELIEVE I informed you, in the beginning of spring, of my intention of coming to this beautiful place, on account of its vicinity to the Villa Marinella, the residence of "La belle Ade-

lina," (the appellation my fair one is known by at Catania). I have accomplished almost domesticating myself at this charming villa. I did not give its inhabitants the alarm at first, wishing to ingratiate myself in their favour before they should be aware of the object I had in view. My appearance excited no surprise, as Aci reale was such a natural place for me to choose for my abode at this fine season, from the facilities it affords for examining at leisure all the natural wonders of Etna, and all the wonders of art displayed in the antiquities of Taurominium. Adelina and I conversed on the beautiful ruins of Syracuse; of course, I could not do less than go there to take drawings of them, and she was equally bound in gratitude to examine them most minutely in my presence. One day her father, rather abruptly, asked me if I unstood *perspective?* I said I was at that moment studying it, and thought it a most delightful employment! He was

concerned that so much good inclination should be thrown away, so insisted on teaching me; and to make the matter worse, took the most abstruse method of doing it. To make a good impression on him I was obliged to brush up my rusty mathematics, and I assure you it required no small self-command to fix my attention on the points of *sight* and points of *distance* he expatiated on; whilst my mind was busily employed in settling these points to my satisfaction, as they regarded Adelina and myself. We have now got on a more agreeable subject, which gives us many delightful hours' conversation—namely, the beauties natural and artificial of this island. On my second visit to the Villa Marinella, I was taken into a saloon adorned with specimens of every thing Sicily could boast of: the floor was mosaic, of all her different marbles; the hangings of Sicilian silk; the walls were embellished with the paintings of Velasquez—

in vases, of the alabaster of the country, bloomed every fragrant flower it produced. There was a cabinet of beautiful workmanship containing highly wrought amber, coral, and cameos; and a Sicilian museum and library of all the best books extant, of native authors ancient and modern, completed the collection. Amongst the moderns Adelina particularly pointed out to me the works of the Abate Ferrara, of Balsamo, Bourigni, and the exquisite poems of Melli and Guegli: the contents of this room afford us constant discussion. Nothing can exceed the beauty of this villa; the hand of taste has been impressed on it from the first stone to the last: it is seated in a rich vale at the foot of Etna, from which pours many a stream in foamy swiftness. The sea is seen, here and there, like a smooth glassy lake, through the dark foliage of magnificent forest trees, whose sombre hues are admirably contrasted with the brilliant tints

of the orange and the vine. The myrtle, the rose, and all the choicest favourites of Flora are "poured forth profuse on hill, and dale, and plain." The beauty of the sky, the balmy fragrance of the air, and the classical and poetical associations which the surrounding scenery brings to the mind, conspire to give a charm to this delightful spot, which no words can convey to the mind of one who has not roamed amidst its enchantments, and still less can language do justice to the feelings of him who has!

Adelina is just the being you would fancy such a scene should produce; no cloud of sorrow, or of error, seems ever to have thrown on her its dark shade; serene in conscious virtue and happiness, and resplendent in mental and physical loveliness,

"She walks in beauty, like the night
Of cloudless climes and starry skies."

I have this day said to this charming

creature every thing that man can say, except those four words, "Will you marry me?" and was proceeding to give them utterance, when I was most unseasonably interrupted. From her surprise and confusion I augur well; whenever I am secure of my happiness you shall know it, but perhaps you are tired of all this, and are ready to say with Virgil,

Sicelides musæ, paullo majora canamus;
Non omnes arbusta juvant, humilesque myricæ*.

Yours ever,
FREDERICK ELTON.

TO CHARLES SEDLEY, ESQUIRE.

Aci reale, August 3, ——

UPON my soul, Sedley, you are a pretty father confessor, and give pious admonition!

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* Sicilian muse, begin a loftier strain;
The lowly shrubs and trees that shade the plain
Delight not all. DRYDEN.

I am quite *indignant* at your answer to my first letter from Catania; either you or I must be greatly changed since we parted. I don't think our friendship could ever have been formed, if in the first instance our sentiments had been so dissimilar. I must honestly tell you, that if you ever write me such another letter about Adelina, our correspondence ceases on that head. It is true this charming Sicilian maid is fairer than Proserpine; but am I Pluto, that could tear her from the arms of her fond parent, and from the bright sphere she now moves in, to condemn her to the shades of woe, from which she could know no return? So powerfully do I feel "the might, the majesty of loveliness," that such a thought never entered my head, nor would it yours, if you had ever seen her; for one glance of her angelic eye would, like the touch of Ithuriel's spear, put to flight all the offspring of evil. Since I wrote to you last, Adelina's manner to me has totally

changed; I scarcely ever see her when I come to the villa. I can't tell what to attribute this to, unless she thinks I have said too much and too little. The matter shan't rest long in doubt;—her father goes to Catania to-morrow, and I will take that opportunity for a complete explanation. I cannot tell you how much I dread the crisis of my fate so near at hand! No folly of my own shall deprive me of a wife possessed of every charm, and every virtue, that can sweeten or adorn life. If it did, I should deserve to be condemned to that matrimonial limbo my father and his frigid Venus are so pitiably bound in. I would prefer to such a trial the most ardent Purgatory! A wife so charming and so unloving would drive me mad!

Yours truly,

FREDERICK ELTON.

A few months after the date of this last letter, Mr. Sedley received one from his

friend, written at Paris, but probably from pique at the style of raillery in which he had continued to express his ideas on the subject of his love for "*La bella Adelina*," Mr. Elton never afterwards mentioned her name; and therefore, from that period, those Sedley received contained nothing of sufficient interest to present to the reader, who will now, however, have little difficulty in guessing the motive of the visit to Sicily, which Frederick mentions his intention of paying, in the letter which Lady Eltondale forwarded to Sir Henry Seymour, of which the subjoined is a copy. The "hopes and fears" he there speaks of, she supposed, alluded to some diplomatic appointments, as, for several months past, all his attention appeared to have been devoted to politics. And, whilst his father exulted in the hope of one day seeing the son he was so proud of "Minister Plenipotentiary" at Berlin, Petersburg, or Vienna, his fair spouse thought, with her

usual sarcasm, "Frederick Elton is, no doubt, peculiarly qualified to carry on or develope the intrigues of a court, with his ridiculously romantic generosity, and high spirit, and candour! His elegant manner and his handsome person would carry every point he wished, if he would but avail himself of the influence these advantages would give him with the females, who are all-powerful in such scenes;—but the youth is much too high flown to have common sense on such matters. My Lord Eltondale is as silly on this subject as on all others, to wish to see his son in a situation where his *mal-adresse* will undoubtedly cover him with disgrace!"

MR. ELTON TO THE VISCOUNT ELTONDALE.

Paris, July 25, ——

My dear Father,

I HOPE to be able to give you a satis-

factory answer to your question of "How do you spend your time at Paris?" for I have been constantly employed, during the last year, in endeavouring to acquire the political information necessary for the public career you have chalked out for me; and this course of study I have pursued with increased ardour, since my return to this capital, with the congregation, not of preachers, but of kings, in order to compensate for the unpleasant interruption my pursuits received in spring from the marvellous apparition of the resuscitated French Emperor. I am now tired of being a gentleman at large; and if you will insist on my shining as an orator in the British senate, my maiden speech ought shortly to be made, for being five and twenty, I think I have no time to lose.

I see the time approach, which we agreed on for my return to England, with a pleasure that is unalloyed by a shade of regret, as the Continent contains no

object whatever of interest to me. I hope to add much to your stock of agricultural knowledge, as I have made the various modes of practising that useful art one of my principal objects of inquiry; and from Syria to Picardy I think I shall be able to describe the present processes of husbandry to your satisfaction. After all, perhaps, you will find me only an ignoramus, though I fancy myself quite an adept.

I set off to-morrow to pay a short visit to Sicily. You will, no doubt, be surprised at this retrograde movement; but should my mission prove successful, I will explain the cause of it when we meet, as I cannot trust my motives to paper; and if I do not carry my wishes into execution, you will, I am sure, spare me the pain of recapitulating them. But until my hopes and fears are at an end, I at least shall not repose on a "bed of roses."

I cannot well express my anxiety to

see you, my ever kind father, after so long an absence! Pray remember me to Lady Eltondale. I am sorry she should so far impeach my gallantry, as to suppose it possible I could leave the letters of so fair a correspondent unanswered. I hope ere this the receipt of mine will have induced her to do me justice; if not, pray be my intercessor.

By the ship Mary, bound for Plymouth, I sent Lady Eltondale some Sicilian vases and cameos, with a few bottles of ottar of roses, and some turquoises I procured at Constantinople. If her Ladyship has not received them, will you have the goodness to cause the necessary inquiries to be made at the office of my agent in London, to whom they were directed.

Believe me, my dear Lord,

Respectfully and affectionately yours,

FREDERICK ELTON.

Sir Henry Seymour, with an air of

triumph, gave the above letter to Selina to read out to her aunt; at the same time casting a look at Mrs. Galton, as much as to say, "You see I was quite right. *I* have provided a husband for Selina, that we shall all be proud of." But her reflection on hearing it was, "I trust my affectionate, innocent, candid Selina is not destined to marry a cold-hearted designing politician. In what a style of heartless politeness does Mr. Elton speak of his father's wife! I fear he will treat his own in the same spirit of frigid etiquette;—indeed, nothing better is to be hoped, from the example he has always witnessed in his own domestic scene."

CHAPTER XI.

How hang those trappings on thy motley gown?
They seem like garlands on the May-day queen!
DE MONTFORD.

SOON after the family at Deane Hall had lost the society of Augustus Mordaunt, they had accepted an invitation to dine at Webberly House. The appointed day having arrived, and Cecilia Webberly, being fully attired for the reception of the expected guests, placed herself in a negligent attitude near one of the windows of her mother's drawing-room, with a book in her hand, not for the purpose of reading, but for that of tossing it into a chair, conveniently set for the occasion, as she had seen Lady Eltondale throw her bonnet the evening of her unexpected arrival at Deane Hall.

There could not, however, be a greater contrast, than the full-blown Cecilia Webberly presented, to the elegant fragile Viscountess. Full one half of her massive figure stood confessed to sight, without a single particle of drapery. Her immense shoulders projected far above her sleeve; in truth, her arm was bare half way to her elbow, and her back in emulation nearly to her waist, whose circumference might well be termed the *Arctic circle*, as it was described at that distance from the pole, which exactly marked the boundary of those regions of eternal snow which rose on its upper verge. Her petticoats, descending but little below the calf of her leg, displayed its "ample round" to the utmost advantage.

But, to counterbalance this nudity, that moiety of her terrestrial frame, which was clothed, was loaded with ornaments and puffings of all descriptions, with reduplicated rows of lace and riband, which

most injudiciously increased her natural bulk; and the little covering which was above her waist, differing in colour and texture from that below, made the apparent seem still less than the real length of her garments. Nor did Cecilia's countenance and manner more nearly resemble Lady Eltondale than her dress and figure, as what was quiet elegance in the latter, might, without any great breach of Christian charity, be mistaken for stupid insipidity in the former.

Miss Webberly had not yet finished the repetition of her anticipated *impromptus*; and her mother had left the room to reiterate her directions about the dinner, so that the fair attitudinist had no spectator of her various rehearsals, except the unaffected Adelaide.

> "And what was her garb?—
> "I cannot well describe the fashion of it.
> "She was not deck'd in any gallant trim,
> "But seem'd to me clad in the usual weeds
> "Of high habitual state.

"Such artless and majestic elegance,
"So exquisitely just, so nobly simple,
"Might make the gorgeous blush."

But Cecilia Webberly was quite unused to *blushing*, though she might sometimes redden with passion, and was equally unconscious of her striking inferiority to her unstudied companion. At last the entrance of the Seymour family presented another contrast to the brazen Colossus in Selina's sylph-like form, vivacious eye, and glowing cheek :—

"The one love's arrows darting round,
"The other blushing at the wound!"

Mrs. Sullivan and her eldest daughter hastened to pay their compliments to their company, the one in the language of Cheapside, the other in all the flowers of rhetoric ; and the rest of the expected guests soon after arriving, they all proceeded to the dining-room, Mrs. Sullivan insisting on giving Selina "percussion,"

(for so she termed precedence) to the blushing girl's infinite annoyance, who, never having dined out before, was unaccustomed to take place of the woman whom, of all others, she most respected: however her painful pre-eminence at the head of the table was almost compensated by her aunt sitting next her, and thus hedging her in from the rest of the company.

The dinner—an object of too much consequence to be passed over unnoticed in the present state of society—was evidently dressed by a man cook; but as Mrs. Sullivan had insisted on making her own alterations in the bill of fare, she had put the poor man in a passion; and, as a natural consequence, the whole was a manqué, no unapt model of the family, presenting vulgarity, finery, and high seasoning out of place.

The warmth of Mrs. Sullivan's temperature was considerably increased by her vocal and manual exertions; whilst

her son was much puzzled to reconcile the *nonchalance* he believed fashionable, with the desire he had to show Selina that obsequious attention he deemed judicious. But though his tongue was incessantly employed in Miss Seymour's service, (for the poor girl would have died of a surfeit if she had taken a fourth part of the eatables he pressed on her acceptance,) his eyes were involuntarily attracted to Adelaide, who, amidst the confusion of tongues, was keeping up a seemingly animated conversation with a very handsome young man, the eldest son of Mr. Thornbull, who sat next her. Of this Mr. Webberly did not approve; and therefore gave her every possible interruption, but all in vain. For no sooner did she answer his inquiry, or assent to his request, than she resumed her conversation, which seemed much more to interest her; and, for the first time, he thought the quick succession of smiles, that passed over her countenance when

she conversed, did not become her so much as its placid expression when she was silent.

At length Selina heard the welcome sound of "Vill you like any more vine, Miss Seymour?" and this well understood summons relieved her from her place of penance.

Soon after the ladies had retired to the drawing-room, they separated, some adjourning to the music-room, some to the green-house, and Miss Seymour gladly accepted Adelaide's invitation to proceed from it to the garden. Selina had, before dinner was half over, thought Miss Wildenheim "the most delightful girl in the world!" But she was too diffident of her own claims to attention to have sought her acquaintance so immediately; though, with her usual precipitation, she felt already convinced she should love her all her life, if she were never to see her again. "She is too elegant, too clever, to like an unpolished girl like me," thought

Selina. But in this she was mistaken; for Adelaide bestowed as much admiration on her untutored charms, as her own more polished graces excited in Miss Seymour's mind, though she manifested her approbation in a more sober manner; for, besides being three years older than Selina, she had, unfortunately, had more opportunity of having youth's first happy feelings chilled by the bitter blasts of capricious fortune.

When Selina found, from Adelaide's expressive manner, that she might say to herself, "She really does like me," her surprise and delight knew no bounds; and, if she had before thought the object of her enthusiasm the most charming of the daughters of Eve, she was now nothing less than an angel. Her pleasure did not escape her new friend's notice; for Selina was too ingenuous to conceal any thing. Adelaide's countenance was illuminated with one of those joyful smiles, which had brightened it in better days,

as she mentally exclaimed, "Happy creature!" But she sighed with real sorrow, as she instantaneously recollected the fleeting nature of youthful impressions, "*when thought is speech, and speech is truth.*"

During the time Selina had employed in her own mind to sign and seal an everlasting friendship with her new acquaintance, they visited the pagoda and hermitage, sat under the marquée, where they found the novel which had been Miss Cecilia Webberly's morning study, and had looked in vain for the gold and silver fishes; for Mrs. Sullivan was too fashionable to dine long before sunset, even in the height of summer. Their fruitless search for their aqueous favourites reminded them of the lateness of the hour; and they had begun to retrace their steps towards the house, when a pretty rosy child, about seven years old, with dancing eyes and disordered hair, came skipping up to them. "This sweet

child, Miss Seymour," said Adelaide, "is Caroline Sullivan, my dear little companion." Selina kissed the child, partly for its own beauty, partly for the sake of its patroness; and the little urchin, hearing the name of Miss Seymour, said, in an arch tone, "I have a secret for you, Miss Seymour—a great secret." "And what is your *great* secret, my pretty little love?" asked Selina. "Why, do you know, brother is going to make love to you?—Mama bid him. And he said he would, for he thinks you have a great deal of money; but for all that he says, my dear Adele is handsomer than you—and I think so too—I believe," said the little thing, stopping to look up at them both. The young ladies were so astonished, that at first they had not power to stop the child's harangue, but both coloured scarlet red from offended pride; and, when their eyes met, the picture of the all-conquering hero and his mama rising at once to Selina's mind in the most ludic-

rous point of view, she burst out into an immoderate fit of laughter, in which Adelaide could not resist joining. The child, from their mirth, thought they were pleased with her observations; and, believing she had said something clever, continued in the same strain; whilst, by grave faces, and knit brows, and remonstrating, they endeavoured in vain to check her volubility.—*Car on ne se guérit pas d'un défaut qui plait.* "Good Lord! what shall we do?" said Selina, half laughing, half crying; for the little girl, in the exuberance of her mirth, seemed bent on following them into the house, with a repetition of her information, when luckily they thought of diverting her attention; and so taking her one by each arm, they almost carried her completely round the pleasure-ground; and, by chattering and running, succeeded in diverting the channel of her thoughts, and were not a little rejoiced that, on their entrance into the

drawing-room, Miss Webberly, in a peremptory tone of "brief authority," ordered the little troublesome urchin to bed.

The ladies were all assembled, and Miss Wildenheim thought it necessary to apologise for their absence; and Selina, immediately walking up to her aunt, excused herself, and wondered she had left her so long, for the advanced state of tea and coffee told her it was late.

When Miss Wildenheim, in reply to some observation addressed to her by Mrs. Temple, entered into general conversation, Selina was as much surprised as delighted by the graceful ease of her manner; and, in the simplicity of her ideas, wondered how she could be so enlivening, and at the same time so elegant. "It is not odd," thought she, "that Lady Eltondale is elegant, for she is so quiet, she has plenty of time to do every thing in the most beautiful manner; but, though she is very elegant, she is not at all en-

tertaining, while Miss Wildenheim is both."

Though Adelaide's character was ever the same, the style of her conversation varied with every different person she conversed with. She was generally *animated*, though seldom gay; and the liveliness of her discourse was owing to her possessing not only an uncommonly clear perception of the ideas of others, but also an equally clear arrangement of her own, which gave her conversation a lucidity, that elicited the thinking powers of her auditors; so that if she was not absolutely witty herself, she was often at least "the cause of wit in others." She was habitually cheerful, and generally self-possessed, except when her feelings were accidentally excited, and they lay too deep to be called forth in the common intercourse of society. In a word, her vivacity proceeded less from the buoyancy of animal spirits, as passing as youth

itself, than from the satisfaction of a soul at peace with itself, and of a mind amused by a constant flow of intellect.

The entrance of the gentlemen transferred Miss Cecilia Webberly, and of course her guests, from the drawing-room to the music saloon. Here again her fine voice, like her fine person, was spoiled by affectation, and by an attempt at displaying a taste, of which nature had denied her mind any just perceptions. She had acquired from her master a would be expression, which consisted of a regular alternation of piano and forte, as completely distinct as the black and white squares of a chess board, with corresponding movements of her eyes and shoulders; the *tout ensemble* seeming to the hearer like a succession of unprepared screams, neither leaving him the peace of a monotonous repose, nor affording him the charm of variety. "By heavens, I would as soon be shut up in a room

with a trumpeter; she has voice enough to blow a man's brains out!" said young Mr. Thornbull to Mr. Temple, while his ears yet tingled with Cecilia's last shout. "I am sure Miss Wildenheim sings in a very different manner." "I am not sure," replied his reverend auditor, smiling, "that she sings at all. If she does, no doubt her judgment is as correct in music as in every thing else;—however, let us see:"—and walking up to Mrs. Sullivan, they begged of her to procure them a specimen of Miss Wildenheim's musical abilities. Adelaide complied with a look and a curtsy, that bespoke the pardon of her imperfections, and which, strange to say, procured a temporary absolution for her charms, even from those to whom they were most obnoxious.

The young man was too much engaged in watching the playful variety of her countenance when she sung (for she never looked half so charming as when singing), to criticise her performance,

but took for granted it was divine, and so must

> "Those who were there, and those who were not."

For though it is easy to exhibit deformity, it is impossible to describe the nicely adjusted balance of opposite beauties, which constitutes perfection: more especially in an art, that is often most felt when least understood, and whose evanescent charms are passing for ever away, whilst the mind is yet revelling in a consciousness of their existence!

When the usual routine of complimenting had been gone through by the rest of the company, and Adelaide was disengaged, Mr. Temple, after praising her performance, said, "Notwithstanding your delightful singing, I must say, I think the best days of music are past." The lovely songstress, casting her eyes on Selina, and thereby applying her words to the beautiful girl's bewitching figure,

replied, "I partly agree with you, my dear sir.—'When music, heavenly maid, was young,' perhaps her wild graces were more captivating than her mature elegance."—"Your simile is just, and well applied. Music certainly now feels her decay, and seeks to hide her faded charms by profuse ornament."

Mr. Temple not unfrequently talked *by inch of candle*, and would have gone on, perhaps, for an hour, had not his wife, tapping him on the shoulder, told him it was time to return home; and, as is usually the case in parties in the country, the announcement of one carriage was the signal for the abrupt departure of the whole company; and though Mrs. Sullivan roared out in an audible voice, "Why, Cilly, you havn't a gone half through the hairs you practised this morning! Where's your bravo hair? and your polacker?" before the anxious mother had recapitulated half the catalogue, she found, equally to her surprise and

dismay, that all her guests had disappeared, nearly as suddenly as Tam O'Shanter's companions, before he had finished his commendatory exclamations:

> "In an instant all was dark,

And,

> "Out the hellish legion sallied."

CHAPTER XII.

Pure was her bosom, as the silver lake,
Ere rising winds the ruffled waters shake;
When the bright pageants of the morning sky
Across the expansive mirror lightly fly,
By vernal gales in quick succession driv'n,
While the clear glass reflects the smile of Heav'n.
HAYLEY.

"WHAT a delightful girl Miss Wildenheim is!" exclaimed Selina Seymour, as she sat at work in Mrs. Galton's dressing-room the day after she had dined at Webberly House.—"I am sure we shall become intimate friends; I never saw any body I admired half so much." Mrs. Galton coincided in Selina's praise of her new favourite; for though she was not equally prone to form "intimate friendships" at first sight, her penetration had

led her to conceive nearly as favourable an opinion of Miss Wildenheim as Selina had expressed. Indeed, Mrs. Galton was particularly desirous of improving her acquaintance with Mrs. Sullivan's interesting ward; for though she was, in general, extremely suspicious of the friendships girls so frequently contract and break with equal precipitation, she was extremely anxious that Selina should meet with a suitable companion of her own sex; and the refined elegance of Miss Wildenheim's manners, the calmness of her deportment, and the good sense which all her observations evinced, led Mrs. Galton to hope, that from her society her beloved niece might derive as much advantage as satisfaction. But at the same time, she recollected, that a degree of mystery seemed to hang over Adelaide's situation; and, therefore, while she gave a willing assent to Selina's encomiums, she cautiously withheld her sanction to a sudden intimacy, until a longer acquaintance confirmed or de-

stroyed her present prepossession in Miss Wildenheim's favour.

Selina had never yet had any female associate, except Mrs. Galton; for though Sir Henry's considerate attention to "poor Mrs. Martin," and her inseparable companion Lucy, occasioned their being frequent visitors at the Hall, yet they were so different in character, pursuits, and situation from Miss Seymour, that no degree of intimacy could ever take place between them. Selina had been so much disgusted by the young ladies at Webberly House, on their first introduction, that she had shrunk from all subsequent familiarity with them, nor did her aunt, in this, endeavour to conquer her prejudices.

Mrs. Galton was aware, that such was the susceptibility of Selina's heart, and the candour of her disposition, that if once she felt a preference, her whole soul would be engrossed by the object of her attachment, and that the strength of her

regard could probably be more easily anticipated than its duration: she was therefore particularly cautious in permitting Selina to have any intercourse with those of whose merits she did not feel well assured; believing that much of her own future character, and consequent happiness, would depend on that of her first guides and associates on her entrance into life. Hitherto, her only companions and her only confidants had been Sir Henry, Mrs. Galton, and Augustus Mordaunt. In them all her innocent affections were centred. To them her whole mind was displayed; and so guiltless was she of even a thought she could blush to own, that she scarcely imagined her ingenuousness was a merit. Nor had the want of other companions in any degree lessened the animation of her character; perhaps, on the contrary, the very antidotes, to which Mrs. Galton had recourse to avoid a premature gravity, had rather tended to increase that vivacity, which

bordered on levity, and was her most dangerous characteristic. Whenever the lessons of her childhood had been concluded, she had always been permitted, and even encouraged, to join in many of those games and exercises, that are usually appropriated to the amusement of the other sex. Often has she quitted an abstruse book, or a beautiful drawing, to trundle her hoop, or run races with her playfellow Augustus. And when other girls have trembled under the rod of the dancing master, she has been gaining health and activity together, by vaulting over gates, that more refined young ladies would, perhaps, have dreaded to climb. It is true, that as she advanced towards womanhood, she was taught to attend rather more to the decorums of life; and, instead of being permitted to bound through the woods like the fawns she dislodged, or even (shocking to relate) walk hand in hand with the old steward over half the park, before girls of fashion

would have broken their first slumbers; she now changed her amusements, and accompanied Mrs. Galton in her charitable errands to the poor, or, attended by Augustus and her groom, rode through the delightful lanes in the neighbourhood. However, since his departure from the Hall, her rides were confined within the park walls, and scarcely a day passed, when the recollection of their rambles, in which she so much delighted, did not serve to renew the expression of her regrets at his absence. But even that circumstance failed to depress her spirits. Perhaps, amongst all created beings, she at that moment was almost the happiest. She knew no world beyond the little circle round her own home, and in that circle she loved and was beloved. Every eye beamed on hers with satisfaction, and every heart returned her affection with redoubled fondness. She dreamed not of insincerity, and she knew not what was grief, except indeed when she enjoyed the

luxury of sharing or alleviating that of others; which her frequent visits to the neighbouring cottages sometimes presented to her view: and never did she look so lovely as when she bent over the bed of sickness, or rocked the cradle of infant suffering, while her eyes swam in tears, or sparkled with the joy of successful benevolence.

Beauty, and grace, and innocence in her
In heavenly union shone: one who had held
The faith of elder Greece would sure have thought
She was some glorious nymph of seed divine,
Oread or Dryad, of Diana's train
The youngest and the loveliest—yea, she seem'd
Angel or soul beatified, from realms
Of bliss, on errand of parental love,
To earth re-sent; if tears and trembling limbs
With such celestial nature might consist.

Though Sir Henry Seymour was extremely hospitable, yet so retired was the neighbourhood of Deane Hall, that the ladies at Webberly House and the

Parsonage were the only ones that Mrs. Galton visited, except Mrs. Martin and Mrs. Lucas. But as autumn approached, the visits of the two latter to the Hall became more frequent; for Sir Henry was fond of what he called a social rubber of whist; and as his constant tormentor the gout disabled him from using any exercise, beyond what his Bath chair procured for him, his chief amusement was in the society of his country friends, who were most happy to assemble round the good Baronet's fire side, when a blazing faggot corrected the influence of a keen air, and gave them a foretaste of the comforts of winter, before they were yet introduced to any of its horrors.

Of these quiet parties Selina was merely a spectator: as, after she had answered all Mrs. Martin's questions, with the same kindness they were asked; provided Lucy with the daily newspaper, and the last new magazine; placed

her father's chair and arranged his foot-stool, (for he thought no one could settle them as comfortably as his Selina); all her duties of the evening were at an end. She could then amuse herself unnoticed, with her pencil or her tambour frame, or have recourse to her harpsichord: where, unambitious of praise, and unstimulated by vanity, she would, for hours, "warble her wood notes wild."

Sometimes, indeed, Mr. and Mrs. Temple would join the party; and though without even the acquisition of their society Selina was always cheerful, yet when she enjoyed the rational conversation of the one, and the lively good-nature of the other, she felt additional pleasure: for both these excellent people looked on Selina almost as a child of their own. Mr. Temple had watched with delight the gradual development of an understanding, from whose matured powers he fondly anticipated every good; though his anxious penetration led him some-

times to shudder for her future character and fate, as he watched the susceptibility of her heart,

> "Which like the needle true,
> Turn'd at the touch of joy or woe,
> But turning—trembled too."

His amiable consort, however, notwithstanding all her deference to his opinion, would scarcely acknowledge that the ray of celestial light, which played round the opening blossom and gave it added brilliancy, might, by prematurely expanding its charms, doom it to untimely decay. And, sometimes, when the venerable pastor, with parental solicitude, almost regretted that volatility, which to indifferent spectators but gave a charm the more, Mrs. Temple, with that fearful prescience which but belongs to a female heart, would stop the intended reproof, and say, "Ah! James, do not check her innocent mirth; the day may come, when we would give the world to see her

smile." Meantime the lovely object of their care would often, when at night she laid her guiltless head on her pillow, as yet unwatered by a single tear, add to her pious thanksgiving a wish that all the world was as happy, as she gratefully acknowledged she was herself.

Little did this innocent child of nature imagine, that fate had already marked the hour, when she was to bid farewell to the calm scenes of her present happiness. Sir Henry never spoke, and could scarcely bear to think, of the engagement between her and Mr. Elton, to which he had so precipitately given his consent: and Mrs. Galton was equally averse to mentioning the subject: of course, therefore, Selina remained totally unconscious of it, and her time passed in the happy alternation of leisure and employment, unmarked by accident, and unimpaired by sorrow. Even the visit of Lord and Lady Eltondale was already almost forgotten by her, or only occasionally

occurred to her memory as a dream, whilst even the fascination she had wondered at and admired by degrees faded from her recollection.

One fine autumnal day, in the beginning of October, she had just returned from one of her favourite rambles in the park, when she abruptly entered the library, to show to Sir Henry an exhausted leveret, that she had discovered panting in a thicket, and that she had brought home in her arms: as she held it she partially covered it by her frock, which she had caught up to keep it warm; without any recollection of the consequent exposure of her beautiful ancle, which this derangement of her drapery had occasioned. Her color was heightened by exercise, and the wind had dishevelled her luxuriant brown hair, that strayed in ringlets on her beaming cheek, whilst her straw hat, almost untied, had slipped off her head, and hung behind, in contrast to the remaining locks

that a comb loosely fastened. Perhaps a painter or a sculptor would have chosen that moment, to perpetuate the beautiful object, that, as Selina opened the door, thus suddenly presented itself to the delighted gaze of two gentlemen, who were then visiting Sir Henry: in one Selina immediately recognised Mr. Webberly, and to the other she was introduced as his friend, Mr. Sedley. At first Selina coloured, as she momentarily recollected her dishabille, if such it might be called; but in an instant, recovering herself, she apologized to her father for her intrusion, and calmly obeyed his directions to seat herself beside him, whilst she dismissed her trembling *protégée* to be nursed below stairs. Was it innate good sense, or was it incipient vanity, that saved this young recluse from the torments of *mauvaise honte*, which so many votaries of fashion feel or feign? Her colour was as variable as the tints of a summer sky; but though it was often heightened, and sometimes

changed by quick susceptibility affecting it, it seldom suffered from that illegitimate timidity, that owes its birth to an inordinate anxiety to please. The language of compliment was foreign to her ear, and she had yet to learn that finished coquetry, that wraps itself in the veil of modesty, and flies to be pursued.

Mr. Webberly stated, the motive of his visit was not only to deliver an invitation from his mother to a ball she purposed giving in a few weeks, but also to add his earnest persuasions, that Sir Henry, Mrs. Galton, and Miss Seymour would accept it. On this occasion the unpolished Selina broke through all the rules of etiquette; and, totally unmindful of the presence of strangers, at the mention of a ball jumped up, clapped her hands, and springing almost as high as another Parisot, exclaimed, as she threw her arms round Sir Henry's neck, "Pray dear, dear Papa, let me go, I've heard so much of balls!" It may be supposed,

the gentlemen strenuously seconded her solicitations: their united entreaties having obtained Sir Henry's consent, they at length withdrew, whilst Selina reiterated her thanks and her joy with equal earnestness and *naïveté.*

"Well, Sedley, what do you think of Miss Seymour?" exclaimed Webberly, as they rode leisurely home. "By Heavens! she is quite beautiful," returned his friend.—"She has the finest eyes and teeth I ever beheld."—"And fine oaks too, or she'd never do for me," rejoined her calculating admirer. A silence of some minutes ensued, which was at last broken by Sedley's observing, that "he had never seen such a profusion of silky hair." "For my part," resumed Webberly, "I like black hair much better: Miss Wildenheim is a thousand times handsomer than Miss Seymour!"

Mr. Sedley neither contradicted nor assented to this observation, but with apparent *nonchalance* turned the sub-

ject to that of shooting and hunting; which promised amusements had been his inducement for visiting Webberly House. The conversation was not again resumed, and they returned scarcely in time to dress for dinner, which the anxious Mrs. Sullivan declared would be quite "ruinated," assuring them, "the cook was always arranged and discordant by them there long preambulations a-horseback they were so fond of."

CHAPTER XIII.

> "All is not empty whose low sound
> Reverbs no hollowness."
>
> KING LEAR.

THE excuse, which Mordaunt had made for his abrupt departure from Deane Hall, was not, in truth, totally devoid of foundation: for he had really received an invitation to join a party of college friends, on a tour to the Lakes; though such a cause would not alone have been sufficient to tear him from a scene, in which all his hopes and wishes were centred. Notwithstanding his being an enthusiastic admirer of the beauties of nature, and moreover a proficient in drawing, all the charms of the wild country he then visited were insufficient long to rivet his attention; and with an agitated

mind and aching heart, he returned early in September to Oxford, of which he meant to take his final leave at the end of the following term. No profession had yet been determined on for him, for his uncle, Lord Osselstone, whose title he was one day to inherit, had never, in the least degree, interfered on the subject of his education; and the habit of procrastination, which was one of the principal failings of Sir Henry Seymour's character, had hitherto prevented his making the important choice. Thus the period of Mr. Mordaunt's minority had expired, before his guardian could be prevailed on to come to any final determination; and Augustus now deferred his own decision till the period, which would speedily arrive, of his quitting the University of Oxford.

The indolence of disposition, which had rendered Sir Henry Seymour's judgment inert, had not extended its torpid influence to his feelings; and a consider-

able degree of resentment was produced in his mind by the indifference, indeed total alienation of all regard, which seemed to mark Lord Osselstone's conduct to his nephew. Once, and once only, before his going to Oxford, had Augustus met his uncle. For, when Mr. Temple was deputed by Sir Henry, to conduct Mordaunt on his first entering college, they had, on their way, passed through London, for the express purpose of paying their respects to his Lordship. But his reception of them had been so cold, so ostentatiously polite, that Mordaunt felt by no means anxious to improve the acquaintance: and yet it might have been supposed, that opportunity of cultivating the friendship of Lord Osselstone would have been rather sought for than declined by his nephew. For all the Earl's estates, which were considerable, were in his own power; and it was the general opinion of those who professed to know him best, that he in-

tended to make a Mr. Davis his heir, who was a distant relation, and had been for many years as unremitting in his attentions to Lord Osselstone, as Mordaunt had been the reverse. Not that Augustus was unaware of the consequence such a disposition of this property might prove to him; for all he inherited from his father was a few thousand pounds, the little that remained of a younger brother's portion, after a life spent and finally sacrificed to the excess of dissipation. But perhaps this conviction on both sides served to make the barrier between them stronger. Lord Osselstone seemed prepared to think, that any attention his nephew could pay him must proceed from interested motives; and Mordaunt was fearful of showing even the little natural affection, that remained in his breast towards him, lest it might be construed into dissimulation.

One of Lord Osselstone's estates was situated within a few miles of Oxford,

where he generally spent a few months every summer;—for he was an upright and considerate landlord, and usually made it a point to visit all his estates in the course of the year, for the purpose of inquiring into the actual state of his tenantry—not that he was ever known to lower a rent or remit a debt: no entreaty, no representation, could ever persuade him either to break an agreement himself, or to suffer it to be broken by another. And if ever he found his rights invaded, or even disputed, there was no extremity or expense he declined in the defence or prosecution of them. He had often heard, unmoved, a tale that might have pierced a heart of stone; and seen, with relentless eyes, the poor man's "one ewe lamb" sold to pay the arrears of rent. But it not unfrequently happened, that the iron-hearted creditor was himself the purchaser of the stock at a price much beyond its value; and the tenant, if deserving, would probably find his Lord's

steward inclined, the next year, to let him have his seed-wheat, not gratis, but nearly so.

One peculiarity in the Earl's character was an extraordinary disposition to disbelieve even the most natural expressions of gratitude, and to doubt any testimony whatever of affection to himself. No way was so sure of losing any claim on his favour, as to make the least allusion to his former kindness; and one of the few domestics, that had at any time remained long in his service, was an old grey-headed valet, who had attended him faithfully from his youth; and had scarcely ever been known to agree with him in opinion, or to hesitate in expressing, in the strongest terms, his disapprobation. Yet even Lord Chesterfield could not better understand the perfection of politeness than did Lord Osselstone, or make it more his constant practice in his intercourse with the world in general. However his real sentiments might differ

from those of his associates, he always took care to soften down so well the sharp angles of dissent, that no cutting point was left to wound the feelings of others; while his own remained impervious to every eye. All acknowledged he was a just man, and every body *felt* he was a proud one; but, however dignified his manners were to his equals, to his inferiors his pride was silvered over with an affability, that, whilst it made it still more conspicuous, served almost to purchase its forgiveness.

To those who reflected on the various qualities of his mind, the picture it presented seemed to be composed of a variety and contrast of colours rarely to be met with, but all so highly varnished, that their very brightness confounded. It seemed a mass of contradiction, by some extraneous power compressed into an indefinable whole. His virtues and his vices trod so closely on each other, that it was difficult to draw the line of

separation between them, and both appeared to owe their origin either to the temporary error, or general superiority of his judgment; all his actions seemed to proceed only from his head—his heart was never called into play. It was difficult to decide whether the finer feelings were really extinct in his breast; or whether, dreading the power passion might usurp, he never for one moment permitted it to assume the reins. In his general establishment he was magnificent;—in the detail of its arrangements almost parsimonious. His charity was ostentatious rather than benign; for, though his name graced every list of public contribution, he never came forward in his own person as the poor man's benefactor. None who experienced the urbanity of Lord Osselstone's manners could believe him to be his own individual enemy; and yet no person could repose in the calm confidence, that Lord Osselstone was his friend. It was evident, that, had he not been a

courtier, he would have been a misanthropist.

In conversation he was generally reserved; but, if circumstances called upon him for exertion, his abilities seemed to rise with the occasion, and his variety of information, his elegance of language, and even the occasional playfulness of his imagination, made him one of the most agreeable of companions. In all Lord Osselstone did, in all Lord Osselstone said, in all he looked, there might be discovered an intensity of thought; which, far from being confined to the surface, seemed to increase in profundity the deeper it was examined. His character, like his manner, was not to be deciphered by vulgar eyes. He was generally serious—never dull; and at times his wit was even sportive. Yet Lord Osselstone, when most gay, could scarcely be deemed chearful. At the moments of his greatest exhilaration, when an admiring audience hung upon his words,

or a more favoured few caught the sparks of animation from the meteor that flashed before them, deriving all their temporary brilliancy from the electric fire of his talents; even at those moments, Lord Osselstone seemed scarcely happy;—the brightness of the emanation was for them; —the dark body remained his own; and few had skill or inclination to penetrate the dense medium that seemed still to surround and obscure his soul.

The first year that Mordaunt had been at college, Lord Osselstone had made no advance towards cultivating the acquaintance that had so inauspiciously commenced; for, except a very slight salutation in an accidental meeting in the street, Augustus had received no mark whatever even of recognizance. And perhaps this inattention was rendered still more mortifying, as whenever Lord Osselstone was in the neighbourhood of Oxford, he generally received a great deal of company at his house; and several of

the young men there, whose connections were amongst his Lordship's associates in London, procured introductions to him, and frequently partook of the elegant hospitality, that always graced his table. Nay, many members of the very college Augustus was in, and some of his own particular friends, received constant invitations to Osselstone Park, from which he alone seemed to be invidiously excluded. On Mordaunt's return to college the following year, he had been much surprised by receiving, in the course of the last week of a term, a formal but polite card of invitation to dinner, to which he sent a still more formal apology, being most happy to have it in his power to allege his intended return to Deane Hall as his excuse; and accordingly he left Oxford the very day, that had been named by his uncle for receiving him. Not, however, that he returned immediately to the Hall. Augustus, though abhorring the excesses into which so many of his contemporaries

thoughtlessly plunged, was still not averse to taste slightly the cup of pleasure, if placed within his reach; and, therefore, usually adopted the geography most in fashion at Oxford, by which it is ascertained to a demonstration, that London is the direct road from thence to every other place in England. He had not then been taught, that the deprivation of Selina Seymour's society for a little fortnight was an irreparable loss; and the theatres and the delights of London were sufficiently new to him, to beguile that, and even a longer time. It was just that season of the year when a London winter begins to subside, not into a healthy spring, but into an unwelcome summer, and when the dying embers of gaiety are only kept alive by a few forced sparks of unwearied dissipation. But to Augustus, who had not glared in the full flame, even these had charms; and he frequented, with unsatiated pleasure, all the places of public amusement then open.

One night at the opera, whither he had repaired with some of his college friends in a state of exhilaration, that, though it fell far short of intoxication, was equally different from his usual tone of spirits, while he was standing in the outer room laughing rather vociferously at some ridiculous observation of his companions, his eye suddenly rested on the face of Lord Osselstone, who, with an unmoved countenance and steady gaze, had been scrutinizing the groupe with minute attention, while they were totally unconscious of his proximity. Augustus's colour rose; and a confused idea that he was the peculiar object of his uncle's observation crossing his mind, he rather increased than restrained the vivacity of his manner. "Lord Osselstone's carriage stops the way," was repeated from stage to stage of the echoing stair-case; and, while the Earl passed close to Mordaunt as he proceeded to obey the clamorous summons, he stopped deliberately, and

observing that "Mr. Mordaunt's visit to Sir Henry Seymour had been a much shorter one than usual," made him a low bow, and pursued his way without waiting for a reply; which, in Mordaunt's then state of mind, would probably not have been an amicable one, indignant as he felt at Lord Osselstone's conveying his only acknowledgement of him in the form of an implied reproof. Here then, once more, ended all intercourse between uncle and nephew; for, when Augustus again returned to college, the invitation had not been renewed; and though in the last examination he had received three several prizes, and with them the compliments of all his friends, Lord Osselstone had witnessed his triumph in silence, though it happened he was in Oxford, nay, even in the school, that very day.

On Mordaunt's arrival at Oxford, at the conclusion of his late northern tour, his thoughts were so completely preoccupied, that he did not even take the

trouble of inquiring whether the Earl was then in the neighbourhood. But as he was one evening sauntering along a retired road on the banks of the river, attending more to the painful reflections of his own mind than to a book which he mechanically held in his hand, he was suddenly roused from his meditations by the sound of a carriage coming furiously behind him; and, turning round, perceived a gentleman alone in a curricle, the horses of which were approaching at their utmost speed, and evidently ungovernable. The furious animals were making directly towards the river, and, if their course was not impeded, immediate destruction inevitably awaited their unfortunate driver. This reflection, and his consequent determination, was but a momentary effort of Augustus's mind. Throwing away his book, he sprang into the middle of the road; and, though the gentleman loudly exclaimed, "Take care of yourself—I cannot manage them," he

deliberately kept his stand, and, at the moment the horses reached the spot, dexterously succeeded in grasping the reins, and stopping the carriage. The suddenness of the jolt, however, unfortunately broke the axle-tree, and threw the gentleman at a little distance on the road. A deep groan instantaneously followed his fall; and Augustus felt a painful conviction, that though his presence of mind had certainly saved the stranger's life at the imminent risk of his own, yet the very act had been the cause of much apparent suffering to him. He hesitated what to do:—the horses, still more frightened by the noise made by the breaking of the carriage, were almost furious; and it was as much as he could do to retain his hold, while the poor suffering man lay helplessly on the road. At length two grooms appeared, rapidly pursuing each other, with marks of the utmost consternation in their countenances; and while one jumped off his horse to assist his master, the other

relieved Augustus from his troublesome charge. The Osselstone liveries proclaimed the stranger's name, as Augustus had not yet seen his face, and the discovery but increased his distress:—"Good God, my uncle! Are you much hurt, dear sir?" exclaimed he, in a tone of commiseration, almost of affection. At the sound of his voice the Earl languidly turned his head as his servant supported him; and, stretching out one hand, grasped that of Augustus, expressing tacitly, but not ineloquently, his gratitude to his preserver. Augustus flew to the side of the river, and bringing some water in his hat, sprinkled it over his face, which in a few moments so revived him, that he was able to articulate thanks, which Augustus, with looks of kindest anxiety, interrupted, with inquiries as to the injury he had evidently received in his fall. He soon found that one arm was broken, and Lord Osselstone otherwise so much hurt, that it was diffi-

cult to move him from the position in which he lay. Without, therefore, an instant's deliberation, and scarcely explaining his design, he sprang on one of the groom's horses, and was in a few moments out of sight. Indeed, so rapid were his movements, that before it could be conjectured that he had even reached Oxford, he was seen returning in a hired chaise and four, accompanied by one of the first surgeons of that town, bringing with him every thing necessary for the accommodation of his uncle.

Before they attempted to remove Lord Osselstone, the fractured bone was set; and the attendants then carefully assisting him into the carriage, the surgeon took his place at one side of him, while Mordaunt, uninvited, supported him on the other; and then desiring the drivers to proceed carefully to Osselstone Park, left the grooms to take charge of the broken equipage.

Though Augustus had never been be-

fore within the gates of this residence of his ancestors, its magnificent scenery had not the power to withdraw his attention, for one moment, from its suffering master. In addition to the natural benevolence of his heart, which would have led him to pity any fellow-creature in a similar situation, from a refinement of feeling, he experienced an additional though certainly an unnecessary pang, from having been in any degree accessary to the present pain; and his judicious and unremitting care resembled that of a son to a beloved father. He watched by his uncle's bed all night, and could scarcely be prevailed upon to leave it to take any nourishment, till the surgeon, on the third day, pronounced the Earl out of danger.

Meantime Lord Osselstone, from whose lips no complaint ever escaped, however painful the operations he underwent, observed every change of his nephew's countenance with a scrutinizing attention; and when in a few days he was

able to sit up, and enter into discourse, the modest good sense of Augustus's remarks, animated as they sometimes were by occasional bursts of a genius not quite dissimilar to his own, seemed not entirely to escape his Lordship's observation. As soon, however, as the Earl was able to leave his room, Augustus took his leave, alleging as his excuse for not accepting Lord Osselstone's polite invitation to protract his stay, that his services could be no longer useful; which was indeed his only motive for so soon separating from his uncle, of whom he now thought with far different feelings than he had done formerly—so natural is it to the human mind, to imbibe a partiality for those we have had it in our power to benefit.

These feelings were, however, soon damped by the receipt of the following note, accompanied by a beautiful edition of Horace, and some other of the classics :—

"Lord Osselstone presents his compli-

ments to Mr. Mordaunt, and has the honour of sending him a few books, of which he requests his acceptance, in return for his late obliging attentions."

"My attentions are not to be purchased," exclaimed Augustus, as he, perhaps too indignantly, tore the note. "Nor," added he, with a sigh, "are my affections likely to be gained by my noble uncle." Then hastily writing the following answer, he returned with it the books by the servant who brought them :—

"Mr. Mordaunt presents his compliments to Lord Osselstone, and begs to assure him, that any attentions he had it in his power to show his Lordship were at the moment sufficiently repaid by the belief, that he in any degree contributed to the comfort of his uncle."

The first time the Earl was able to venture out in his carriage, he called at Mordaunt's apartments. But as he did

not then happen to be at home, they did not meet previous to his Lordship's leaving the country—a circumstance which Augustus by no means regretted.

THE TANJORE MAHARAJA SERFOGI'S SARASWATI MAHAL. *

CHAPTER XIV.

This is my lady's holyday,
So pray let us be merry.

FOUR AND TWENTY FIDDLERS ALL IN A ROW.

WHILST Mordaunt was thus occupied at Oxford, Mrs. Sullivan had been indulging in a variety of speculations, the object of which were, to endeavour to secure to her beloved son the rich and beautiful heiress of Deane Hall. In order to afford him a favourable opportunity of paying his addresses to Miss Seymour, the anxious mother resolved to give the ball, for which he had personally taken the invitation; and as soon as Sir Henry had returned the desired answer, the preparations for the entertainment were without delay commenced. It was agreed

nem. con. that a *crowded* entertainment was more fashionable than a select one; and therefore, that every person by any excuse pronounced *visitable*, within a circuit of twenty miles, was to be pressed into the service. Mr. Webberly, and the gentlemen who were staying with him, proceeded to York, to enlist as many beaux as they possibly could; whilst Mrs. Sullivan wrote to London, to engage temporary rooms, transparencies, coloured lamps, upholsterers, musicians, and confectioners.

For a fortnight before the important day, all was confusion at Webberly House. The usual furniture was put to flight;—bed-rooms were converted into tasteful card-rooms, and store-closets into beautiful boudoirs; whilst all the various operations were accompanied by an unceasing noise of hammering, scouring, scolding, and arguing.

Miss Webberly and her sister kept themselves aloof from the scene of action,

preferring playing billiards, or riding with Mr. Sedley and the other gentlemen, to giving their mother the smallest assistance, who repented of her undertaking ten times a day. But Adelaide was not so selfish; and the moment she perceived Mrs. Sullivan's perplexity, she left her usual occupations to offer her assistance. "Well, well," thought Mrs. Sullivan, "I wish Meely and Cilly were as discreet as this poor child. But it isn't their faults, pretty dears. I never used them to no thrift; and, I dare say, her nose has been well kept to the grinding-stone, as the like of her ought. My daughters, God bless them, have got a rare spirit of their own!" (Would to Heaven it were a rare spirit!)

Miss Webberly thinking that chalking the floor of the dancing-room would afford a good opportunity for displaying her knowledge of the fine arts, at first joined Adelaide in the task; but quickly dis-

covering that kneeling on bare boards was more fatiguing than classical, left her at the end of a quarter of an hour, to finish it alone, with a request not to be sparing in the introduction of the Webberly arms. No mention was made of the Sullivan honours ; for, though that family traced its pedigree *beyond the flood*, it had never been heard of in London, and, therefore, was of no value.

At nine o'clock on the appointed evening Mrs. Sullivan entered the reception room ; and seeing Adelaide already there, said, "That's right, Miss Wildenheim, you be's always ready. I never can get them there girls of mine to dishevel themselves in time. Will you be so kind as to help me to put out the lights in them there chandlers ? They can stay unlit a bit, for none of the gentlemen ban't dressed yet, and we can light 'em again when the folk come to the door, you know—I loves to practise genteel economy." Adelaide

executed her commission; and her companion then proceeded to examine her attire with the most minute attention; and, as her eye was attracted by the beautiful ornaments, which confined and were intermixed with her luxuriant hair, she exclaimed, "La! what fine pearls you have got on—your *mother's* I suppose, Miss." "Yes, madam," replied Adelaide, mournfully, "she had a great quantity of pearls, which were new set for my use." "Wery like, Miss, wery like," retorted the scornful lady; and, turning disdainfully from her, bustled off to another part of the room, muttering, "Oh the vickedness of this vorld!"

Adelaide was dressed in that last stage of *real mourning*, which, from its chaste contrast of colour, is perhaps the most elegant attire a beautiful female can wear, as it seems to throw a veil on the loveliness, which, in truth, it embellishes. Her mental, as well as personal charms,

were softened by the same garb of sorrow; and perhaps their beauty,

> "Thus mellow'd to that tender light
> Which Heav'n to gaudy day denies,"

was more winning than when they shone in their original brightness. She was roused from a train of sorrowful reflections, which the mention of her mother had occasioned in her mind, by a sound of carriages, and by Mrs. Sullivan exclaiming, "As sure as the devil's in Lunnon, here they be; Miss Wildenheim, do light that there candle brass, whilst I turn the cock of this here lamp;" and the task was but just accomplished, when a large party entered the room.

The *coup d'œil* which Webberly House now presented was really beautiful; for from London every thing in the way of decoration, even taste, may be procured. The vestibule and apartments opening into it

were ornamented with wreaths of flowers, laurels, and coloured lamps, and with beautifully designed and well executed transparencies. The windows were left open, and displayed the *Chinese* bridge splendidly illuminated, beaming like an arch of light in the surrounding darkness. The carved work of the porch was completely interlaced with wreaths of colored lamps; and not less splendid were the grotto and hermitage, which at a small distance from the house were fitted up to resemble the rooms of rival restaurateurs. At their entrance Cecilia had placed her own maid and footman, to distribute refreshments; and she had been busily employed for some days, in teaching them as much French as their capacity and her knowledge would permit them to acquire, for which the slang of the one, and the Cockney dialect of the other, admirably qualified them. A temporary canvass passage led to the station of these pseudo-'Parisians, which soon became the favour-

ite lounge of the evening, as the constant mistakes they made in the names of all the refreshments they presented excited so much laughter, that every set of visitors was sure to recommend another, to enjoy the bodily and mental entertainment provided for them.

When the company first assembled, a brilliant display of fire works was let off on the lawn, and just as the last rocket was ascending, Mrs. Martin and her niece entered the ball room. They had met with sundry difficulties, as to conveyances, which had delayed their arrival so long.

Unfortunately for them, the company had, at that instant, nothing more amusing to do, than seeking for subjects of ridicule; and in poor Lucy Martin's dress they found an ample field. Her *ci-devant* blue spencer had been tranformed into a fashionable body for a new pink petticoat, under the superintendence of Miss Slater, who had informed her, that " whole

gowns were quite out, as all the ladies in London now wore dolphin dresses," of which no two parts were of the same colour. Nearly all the finery of Mr. Slater's shop had been deposited on her person; and it would have been impossible for the greatest connoisseur in tinting to have decided which was the prevailing colour in her dress: but as she and her aunt were made happy, by the idea of her being "quite smart," her appearing to the rest of the company in a most ludicrous point of view would have been of no consequence, had not the unsuitable extravagance deprived them of many almost necessary comforts for a long time afterwards, for which the display of this evening but poorly compensated.

Before the unfeeling crowd had more than half finished their commentaries on the curious specimen of taste the unconscious girl exhibited, their attention was diverted by the arrival of Sir Henry Sey-

mour, who with all the formality of the *vieille cour* entered the room, with a *chapeau de bras* under one arm, and Mrs. Galton leaning on the other. At her side walked Selina in unadorned loveliness, her eyes sparkling with delight at all the wonders that were presented to her view, and totally unsuspicious that she was herself the goddess of the fairy scene of pleasure. All eyes were fixed on her beaming countenance radiant in smiles; and even envy, for the moment, pardoned such unpresuming charms. Mr. Webberly had waited to open the ball with Selina, and immediately led her to the head of the room, where, scarcely conscious of the pre-eminence, her attention was so completely engrossed by all the beauty and variety of the decorations, that she neither listened to nor understood the fulsome compliments he momentarily addressed to her. Though little skilled in the fashionable art of dancing, the natural grace and

vivacity of all her movements, and the uncommon loveliness of her person, more than compensated for this deficiency; and when she happened to make any mistake in the figures she was unaccustomed to, she laughed so innocently and so heartily at her own blunders, and in so doing displayed such dazzling teeth and evanescent dimples, that one more practised in the arts of coquetry would purposely have made the same errors, thus to have atoned them.

From the moment Miss Seymour had entered the room, Mr. Sedley had watched her every motion; and, as he happened to stand behind Webberly in the dance, he could not help exclaiming, "By Jove, Jack, if you get that girl you'll be a lucky dog." Webberly cast a glance on his lovely partner, in which real exultation was ridiculously blended with affected contempt; and shrugging his shoulders, replied, "She is half wild now, we must give her a little fashion when she comes

amongst us." Sedley turned on his heel, and joined a groupe of young men, who were loudly expatiating on the charms he affected to despise. Sedley also joined in her praise; for as yet, though his warm admiration was excited, his heart was not sufficiently interested to create a wariness in the expression of its feelings; and as the whole party professed their anxiety to be introduced to her, he laughingly boasted of his prior claims, and hastened to secure her hand for the two following dances. And now, according to a writer of the days of Queen Bess, "Some ambled, and some skipped, and some minced it withal, and some were like the bounding doe, and some like the majestic lion."

Adelaide alone refused every solicitation to join in the festivity; and when Mrs. Temple urged her to accept of some of the numerous partners who contended for her fair hand, she replied, with a mournful expression, "Dear Mrs. Tem-

ple do not ask me; surely this dress was never meant for *dancing*;" so saying, she cast down her eyes to conceal their watery visitors. Sedley, who had overheard her observation, took this opportunity of examining her perfect features. He thought he had never seen her look so lovely as at that moment, for

> "Upon her eye-lids many graces sat,
> Under the shadow of her even brows;"

and mentally exclaimed, "The braid of dark hair that borders that fair forehead, 'so calm, so pure, yet eloquent,' is indeed beautiful in contrast! Of all dresses certainly that becomes her most, it so harmonizes with the style of her countenance;

> "One shade the more, one ray the less,
> Had half impair'd the nameless grace,
> That waves in every raven tress,
> Or softly lightens o'er her face."

Sedley was proceeding to compare in

thought the merits of blondine and brunette complexions, eyes of bewitching animation or touching softness, hair of glossy black or silken brown, and in short the various charms, which united to form the perfect models of the opposite styles of beauty which Selina and Adelaide presented, when he was diverted from this agreeable occupation by Mrs. Sullivan screaming in his ear, "Law! Mr. Sedley, I vish I vas O'fat (probably *au fait*) of what you're in such a brown study for; there's my daughter, Cilly, keeping herself *enragé* all this time to dance with you." Of course he could not refuse this summons, and immediately led her to join the dancers, scarcely regretting that the set was nearly finished.

When Cecilia passed by, overloaded with finery, and encumbered with ornament, Mrs. Temple exclaimed, "Good heavens! how that handsome girl has contrived to disfigure herself! It is no wonder her mother complained of her

being so long dressing: I hope, my dear Miss Wildenheim, you will never give into such follies." Adelaide smilingly replied, "I cannot invert the first axiom of mechanics, and say of the labours of the toilet, *that we gain in power what we lose in time.*" "Never, my dear girl, as long as you live, mention the word *mechanics* again, on pain of being pronounced a learned lady; which crime, in this country, is punished by tortures far more severe than the *peine forte et dure* of the old French law. I assure you, in England, the reputation of *femme savante* is scarcely less odious than that of *femme galante.* A fool with youth and beauty may be quite *recherchée,* but no mental or bodily perfection can atone for the blemish of *learning* in a woman!" Mrs. Temple's attention was now attracted by seeing Mrs. Sullivan doing the honours to a *soi-disant* beau, who scarcely heard what she said, being intent on copying the air of real fashion so striking in Mr.

Sedley. "This here's the courting room, Sir—That there's the refrigerating house for drinking o-shot—And that there's my daughter Meely, and that there other one's my Cilly—we calls one Grace and Dignity and the other Little Elegance—I'm sure you must allow we've given them wery opprobrious names.—Look'ee here, Sir, Meely did all this here topography herself*, entirely from her own deceptions; I assure you, Sir, she's prodigiars clever." Mrs. Temple, finding Mrs. Sullivan's discourse utterly subversive of all decorum of countenance, left the dangerous neighbourhood, and took Adelaide to walk about the room, for the double purpose of composing her own features, and informing her young friend of the names and characters of such of the guests as she was unacquainted with. "Who is that lovely innocent girl, sitting near the transpa-

* Pointing to the chalking on the floor.

rency of Mirth and her crew, with her head on one side, and her eyes cast down with so much modesty?" "I dare say, Miss Wildenheim, she is at this moment, with affected *naïveté*, saying something to the gentleman next her, which *he* finds unanswerable. She is a most incorrigible little flirt; and as she is no fool, her conversation is in my mind quite reprehensible. She was the daughter of a poor baronet of this county, and to counterbalance her want of fortune, was brought up in the most homely manner, being, for example, accustomed to iron her own clothes and go to market. Against the consent of her friends, she married a *petit-maître* parson, with little except a handsome person and agreeable manners to recommend him, and nothing but a curacy to support him and his beautiful young wife. They now live with his mother, who takes care of their children, the father being too constantly occupied in fish-

ing, hunting, and snoring, the mother in dressing, dancing, singing, and flirting, to find time for the discharge of their duty to their offspring. Delicate as she looks, she will go through any fatigue to attend a ball or party: I suppose you will scarcely believe, that she has walked eight miles this morning, carrying her own parcel, to be here to-night." Before Adelaide could offer any comment on this portrait, Mrs. Temple's attention was attracted by another acquaintance: "Why, bless me, (said she) there is old Mr. Marshall: what can have brought him here all the way from Kingston, to-night? except, perhaps, to have the pleasure of seeing his daughters admired: and it would delight any father's heart to look at that beautiful creature in blue, now showing the very perfection of a lady's dancing. That little laughing girl standing beside her is her sister, who is one of the pleasantest creatures I ever knew."—"Oh!" said Adelaide,

"I believe she is the Miss Marshall I met lately at Huntingfield, who gave vent to as many ideas in half an hour, as would serve an economist in speech for a week; I could not help applying to her Mrs. Sullivan's adage, that *stores breed waste*."

"And now, my dear Miss Wildenheim," resumed Mrs. Temple, as, weary of their promenade, they seated themselves, "if you are curious to inform yourself as to the beaux of this assembly, you have only to keep your eyes steadily fixed in the direction of that large mirror, and as they pass point them out to me; for I will venture to say there is hardly a young man in the room, who will not, in the course of the evening, stop opposite to it, and settle his cravat. Look there now, already! observe that youth adjusting his dress - - - I hope you saw the shake he gave his head when he had done, as if to ascertain whether he had any brains in it or not; much in the

style of a thrifty housewife, who uses this method with her eggs, when she wishes to discover if any spark of animation lurks within. If he had applied to me," continued Mrs. Temple, " I could have saved him the trouble he has just put himself to, and would have solved the doubts the vacant countenance he saw in the glass excited, by answering in the negative without hesitation. This gentleman, at present, resides a few miles from hence, for the purpose of canvassing the town of ————, in hopes to represent it in the next parliament. His travelling equipage is not exactly suited to the character of a British senator. In addition to the usual establishment of blinds, his carriage is fitted up on the outside with shades to save his complexion, and in the barouche seat are two monkeys trained to act as footmen. It is the received etiquette for every new candidate to make his *début* as *patriot;* he therefore, of course, talks loudly of

'Parliamentary reform:' perhaps he may have some ambitious views for the ape tribe; indeed I have heard it whispered, that one or two have been detected in both honourable houses before now."

Adelaide was much entertained by Mrs. Temple's volubility, but said she was inclined to differ from her friend as to the conclusion to be drawn from this singular *cortége*. "You know, my dear Mrs. Temple, to have 'grace enough to play the fool, craves wit,' *sense* is quite another affair; but I think it is only those that have at least some talent, who venture to take out this sort of temporary act of lunacy against themselves, well knowing they can give convincing proof of sanity when necessary. I have formed this conclusion from observing, that the English alone ever make these eccentric exhibitions; you will readily allow, that if any nation equals, none exceeds them in solid abilities. If the young gentle-

man in question is under twenty-five, I would risk something in favour of the contents of his head, on the strength of the two monkeys. What a pity Dr. Gall is not here to decide for us, by means of his soul-revealing touch; our craniologists, you know, tell us, they have wit, memory, sense, and judgment at their fingers' ends: it is to be hoped they have them elsewhere also." "What you say of Mr. B——," replied Mrs. Temple, "amazes me: I own, from you, who are one of the most rational of human beings in your own department, I expected no toleration of folly." "Oh, I think the case is far different in the conduct of women," said Adelaide: "our minds have not the strong re-active power those of men possess; they, in the regions of folly not unfrequently 'fall so hard, they bound and rise again,' but we are not sufficiently firm to possess such elasticity." "I believe you are right, my dear girl: would you like to visit the

other apartments? I have not seen them yet." Miss Wildenheim consented with alacrity, and they accordingly proceeded towards the vestibule, where numerous groupes were promenading, as the dancing was for a time discontinued.

Adelaide, whilst amusing herself with Mrs. Temple's account of the company, by degrees herself became an object of general admiration. Although there were some women present of greater personal beauty than Miss Wildenheim, yet in her "*La grâce, plus belle encore que la beauté* *," won the eye from the contemplation of more perfect loveliness. "Who is she?" was repeated from mouth to mouth, as she crossed the vestibule; and when nobody could answer the question, it was asked with increased earnestness. All agreed she was foreign, and that there was something not English in her countenance, her manner of wearing her dress,

* Grace more lovely than beauty,

but above all in her walk. As an epidemical mania for every thing continental once more reigns in England, the idea that Adelaide was a foreigner, above all things, stamped her the belle of the night; she was followed from room to room, and wherever she turned innumerable eye-glasses were levelled at her. The attention she excited at last becoming perceptible even to herself, with a look of anxious inquiry she said to Mrs. Temple, "Is there any thing remarkable in my appearance, that those people stare so?" "Yes, my dear, something very remarkable." "Then pray, pray tell me what it is." "Your ignorance of it is one of your greatest charms, and I am not envious enough to wish to deprive you of any of them." This reply covered Adelaide with blushes, and adorned her with a hue, which was the only beauty her fine countenance did not usually possess. For sorrow had breathed witheringly on the roses, that once had bloomed on her soft

cheek.—Will the voice of joy ever recal them from their exile?

The Webberly family, finding Adelaide the admiration of the company, now came up to her, not to show *her* kindness, but to show *their guests* she belonged to them; and their ostentatious civility provoked a smile of contempt from Mrs. Temple, who had been indignant at their previous neglect. Miss Wildenheim was soon surrounded by a crowd of beaux and belles, who addressed her in good, bad, or indifferent French, Italian, German, or Spanish—some from the polite wish of showing proper attention to a stranger, others from a natural curiosity as to subjects of foreign interest. But a large number, from the pure love of display, gave utterance to as many scraps of any foreign language as their memory furnished them with from books of dialogues or idioms; and, as soon as these were exhausted, found some urgent reason for retreating to the very opposite

part of the room, taking care to keep at an awful distance from her for the rest of the night. Many a poor girl was brought forward by her mother, *bon gré, mal gré,* to display her philological acquirements. Adelaide happened to overhear part of a dialogue, preparatory to an exhibition of this sort. "Italian, mama! Indeed, indeed, I can't: besides it is quite unnecessary, for Mrs. Temple says she speaks English fluently." "But you know, love," replied the matron, "it is such good breeding to address strangers in their own language." "Yes, *dear* mama, it is indeed; she is a German, and, I dare say, doesn't understand Italian." "That doesn't signify, come and speak to her directly, Miss." "Pray, pray, let it be in French then," said the girl, half crying; "I have only learned Italian three months, and it's ten to one if I happen to know what she says to me." "Why, you know, Maria, when I brought Flo- Floril—(you could help me to the name

if you chose)—but, in short, that travelling Italian you had your flowers of, to talk to you, he said he took you for a native; but you may speak Italian first, and French afterwards, and that will be a double practice, my dear." There was no reprieve;—and a very nice girl, colouring crimson deep from shame and anger, stammered out a sentence of wretched Italian, whilst the mother stood by with an air of triumph, to see her orders obeyed, and observe who was listening. Adelaide, pitying the poor girl's confusion, replied in French, apparently for her own ease, and addressed to her a few sentences, which afforded an opportunity of throwing in that everlasting self-congratulating "*oui, oui,*" which is the young linguist's best ally, even more useful than Madame de Genlis' "*Manuel du Voyageur,*" which, by the bye, an adept in short hand might have taken down that night. The young lady and her mother soon left Adelaide, both highly delighted;

and, however unwilling the former had been to make the experiment mama had enjoined, she certainly thought much more highly of her own attainments after this happy result. Adelaide was then introduced to a gentleman who spoke French with as much fluency as herself, and they soon got into that style of conversation, to which the term *spirituelle* is so justly applied, where appropriate diction and elegant idea lend charms to each other: in the language to which she had from infancy been accustomed, she expressed herself with peculiar felicity, and seemed to take the same sort of pleasure in doing so one feels in meeting a long absent friend. Mrs. Temple was now a silent and wondering spectator, vainly endeavouring to find out how such a girl as Miss Wildenheim could have become an inmate of Mrs. Sullivan's family; and remarked that her manner and acquirements always rose to the level of the scene which called them forth. At that

instant she acquitted herself with as much grace of all those dues of society, which the passing moment demanded, as she, with cheerful sweetness, contributed to the amusement of her friends in the quiet family circle at the parsonage. Mrs. Temple was half angry at the ease of her manner in such a situation; but when she again looked at Adelaide, observed her varying blushes, vainly watched for any symptom of coquetry or attempt at display; and at last caught an imploring glance, which seemed to say, like Sterne's starling, "I can't get out—pray relieve me," she felt the injustice of her incipient censures. She was for an instant prevented from obeying the summons, by an old general officer asking her, "If that young lady was any relation of the Baron Wildenheim, who so much distinguished himself at the battle of Hohenlinden, and so many other desperate encounters of the same campaign?" "Possibly his daughter," replied Mrs. Temple; "but

pray don't direct any question of that nature to her; for whenever such subjects are alluded to, she seems deeply affected." When Mrs. Temple again took Adelaide's arm, she found Mr. Webberly importuning her to dance. Mrs. Sullivan had made him promise that morning not to ask Adelaide to dance, for fear of making Miss Seymour jealous! But he could no longer deny himself the pleasure, for which he had most looked forward to this evening; and, in spite of his mother's frowns and signs, (seldom indeed much attended to at Webberly House) he solicited Adelaide with much earnestness, to dance a set with him, which he offered to procure express before supper. But as she steadily refused, he, to solace himself, prevailed on a city cousin, (whose wealth procured her admittance to her aunt's house) and his sister Cecilia, to exhibit themselves as waltzers. Cecilia's partner was the *soi-disant* beau, who had been so indefatigable in his polygraphie

of ton; and the travesty of Lady Eltondale and Sedley was inimitably ludicrous to those who had a key to the libel. The company had long been tired of quizzing poor innocent Lucy Martin; equally fatigued with the amusements provided for them; were almost weary of admiring and comparing Selina and Adelaide, most of the ladies by this time having discovered, that though the latter had a certain "*je ne sais quoi*" about her that was taking, her hair was too black, and her complexion too pale, for beauty; and that the loveliness of the former defied criticism—an unwilling confession, which rendered their first triumph nugatory; so that the waltzers afforded a very seasonable diversion. Nothing could be fancied more laughable than the undextrous twirling of the quartet; and few things are more worthy, in every respect, to be the subject of that spirit of ridicule which so unfortunately pervades every society, than this anti-Anglican

dance. Mrs. Temple whispered to Adelaide,

> "So ill the motion with the music suits;
> "Thus Orpheus play'd, and like them danc'd the brutes."

"How could Mrs. Temple be so ill bred as to whisper?—The whole thing is *mauvais ton*,' no doubt some decorous belle now exclaims. Gentle reader, if thou hast never sacrificed thy friend or thy love of the *exact* truth to a joke, thou hast a right to vent thine indignation against this breach of *etiquette*. When thine ire is exhausted, proceed to read, and thou wilt find that the cause of thine indignation is at an end.—Supper was at length announced; the company were conducted into rooms laid out in the same style of ornamental profusion as those they had already visited. After supper, dancing was resumed with increased ardour, and continued to an early hour,

When the company separated, they exchanged the glare of candles for the light of the sun; and the sound of the harp, tabret, and all manner of musical instruments, for the song of birds and the whistling of the husbandman.

CHAPTER XV.

Stranger to civil and religious rage,
The good man walk'd innoxious through his age.
No courts he saw.—

POPE.

FEW people were ever endowed with a greater capacity of receiving pleasureable emotions than Selina Seymour, and the whole tenour of her joyful life had hitherto tended to increase this inestimable gift of nature. She had been as happy at Mrs. Sullivan's ball, as it was possible for any innocent being, without a care for the present or a regret for the past; and the pleasure of her own mind was reflected back to her tenfold in the approving smiles of her father and aunt. Her delight in the gay scene was unalloyed by envy or competition. She,

had never been taught to estimate her *happiness* by her height in the scale of admiration; for her fond relatives, thinking her always charming, and ever considering her felicity more than the gratification of their own pride, had not tortured her by preparations for exhibition ; and, as long as she danced with pleasure to herself, they cared not *how*. The happy girl so keenly enjoyed the brilliant scene, was so grateful for the marked attention she received, that she had not time to stop to consider whether she was *admired* or not ; and, perhaps, if this query had even occurred to her mind, the answer to it might have been a matter of indifference—sufficient was it to her felicity to know she was *beloved*.

But all Selina's delight would have been turned to pain the more exquisite, could one fold of the veil of futurity have been raised to show her the near approach of misery. On that night she first saw pleasure decked in her festal robe, her

brow crowned with flowers, her countenance radiant with smiles, presenting her enchantments with one hand—but saw not the other beckoning to the hovering forms of disease and death, to array her in the garb of wo:—a task they too quickly performed; for alas! this scene of gaiety was but the antechamber of grief.

Selina rose next day, refreshed with a few hours sound sleep; and, animated with more than her general vivacity, was skipping down stairs with her usual velocity, when she was stopped by Mrs. Galton; and, terrified at the expression of her countenance, "Good God, aunt Mary!" exclaimed she, "what is the matter you look so pale—are you ill?" "No, my dear, no; but I am sorry to say your father is very unwell. Don't be so much alarmed, my dear child—he is better now. Where are you going?" continued she, holding Selina fast. "To see my dear papa." "You must not,"

Selina, Mr. Lucas is with him, endeavouring to compose him to sleep.—Come to the library, my love, and let us have breakfast." They proceeded quietly and sorrowfully; and Selina, on entering it, perceived her aunt was in the dress of the night before. "Why, my dear aunt, you have never changed your dress. Oh, that vile ball! my dear dear father has got cold. I wish we had never gone;" and here, quite overcome by the acuteness of her feelings, she burst into a paroxysm of tears. Mrs. Galton was not sorry to see her give way to her grief; but when she became a little composed, addressed her with much solemnity of manner, saying, "Selina, my dear Selina, command yourself! I require you to exert all your fortitude; you must not, in a scene like this, render yourself worse than useless. Do not selfishly give yourself up to your own feelings. Remember, my child, you may be of much comfort to your father." Selina answered but by

a motion of the hand, and, retiring for a short time to a solitary apartment, threw herself on her knees, and, by a fervent supplication for support from Heaven, at last composed herself so far as to return to her aunt with a calm countenance, though still unable to speak. One expressive look told Mrs. Galton she was aware of her father's danger, and was prepared to make every proper exertion. Sir Henry had at Webberly House most imprudently accompanied his darling Selina in one of her visits to the hermitage; and, in consequence of the draughts of air and damps to which he had thereby exposed himself, was, on his return to the Hall, seized with the gout in his stomach in a most alarming manner. Mr. Lucas had been immediately sent for, and, pronouncing him in imminent danger, had requested that better advice might be procured without delay. At length the violence of the attack seemed to give way to the remedies administered; and Mr.

Lucas was, as Mrs. Galton said, endeavouring to procure sleep for his patient, when she heard Selina's bell; and, taking a favourable opportunity of leaving the sick room, was proceeding to break the intelligence to her, when they met on the stairs. The ladies continued at the breakfast in perfect silence, Mrs. Galton not even addressing Selina by a look, as she well knew that a mere trifle would destroy the composure she was endeavouring to acquire. When they left the breakfast table, Mrs. Galton took Selina up stairs, to assist her in changing her dress, as she feared to leave her alone, and wished to employ her in those little offices of attentive kindness, which, by their very minuteness, disturb the mind from meditating on any new-born grief, though they only irritate the feelings, when sorrow has arrived at maturity. Mrs. Galton's watchful eye soon discovered Dr. Norton's carriage at the lower end of the avenue; and that Selina

might be out of the way on his entrance, sent her to walk in the garden, promising to call her the moment she could be admitted to see her father. When Dr. Norton arrived, he immediately repaired to Sir Henry's apartment; and, on hearing it, gave a sad confirmation of Mr. Lucas's opinion, expressing his fears, that though his patient was tolerably easy at that moment, violent attacks of the complaint might be expected; and if *they* should not prove fatal, the weakness consequent on them most probably would. Mrs. Galton entreated he would remain at Deane Hall till Sir Henry's fate was decided, which request he, without hesitation, complied with.

Had Dr. Norton conveyed his intelligence to Selina herself, it could scarcely have afflicted her more deeply than it did Mrs. Galton. Her regard for Sir Henry was great, and not less lively was her gratitude for the constant kindness he had for a long course of years shown her; so,

that had not another being on earth been interested in his life, she would, in her own feelings, have found sufficient cause for sorrow. But when she anticipated Selina's grief, should the fears of the physician be realized, her own misery was tenfold aggravated by her commiseration for the beloved child of her heart—the dearest solace of her existence!

These reflections even increased the usual fondness of Mrs. Galton's manner to Selina, when, on her return from the garden, she answered the anxious child's inquiries for her father. She had a hard task to fulfil—fearful of telling her too much or too little. To avoid any direct reply, she informed her she might now go to Sir Henry's room, and Selina, without a moment's delay, was at his bed-side. The poor old man, anxious, if possible, to postpone the misery of his child, assured her he was now easy, and desired her to tell him all she thought of the night before. The innocent girl, on hearing

this request, flattered herself with all the delusion of hope, that her aunt's fears had exaggerated the danger; and, elated by the idea that her father's complaint had subsided, talked with much of her usual vivacity, which increased as she perceived her lively ingenuous remarks cheered the sick man's face with many smiles.—Little was she aware, they were the last her own would ever brighten on beholding.

An express, without delay, was dispatched to Mordaunt, requesting his immediate presence at Deane Hall. When Selina heard of her father's anxiety for his arrival, her spirits again sunk, and she reflected in an agony of sorrow, that "Yesterday she could not have supposed it possible the idea of seeing Augustus could have been a severe affliction to her." The night of that sad day Selina requested she might pass in attendance on her father. Her aunt, fearful of what the morrow might bring forth, gratified her desire. Dreadful were the reflections

that night gave rise to, as she contrasted the awful stillness of Sir Henry's chamber with the noisy gaiety of the one, in which she had spent the night before.

Two or three days of dreadful suspense thus passed over Selina's head: whenever she was permitted she was at her father's bed-side, passing in an instant from the utmost alarm to hope. But though she saw despair expressed in every face, her mind still rejected it. She could not bring herself to believe her beloved father was indeed to die!

Those who most fervently love most ardently hope, and building their faith on the most trifling circumstances, cling to it with a force none less deeply interested can imagine. It is well they do. Their fond hopes makes them use exertions, and bestow comforts, they would be otherwise incapable of. And thus affection is enabled to cheer the bed of death to the last moment.

And as for the survivors! no anticipa-

tion can prepare them for the overwhelming despair of the moment in which they lose what they most prize on earth!

Grief, rising supreme in this her hour of triumph, will have her dominion uncontrolled, and defies alike the past and the future,—even religion must be aided by time to subdue her giant force.

On the evening of the third day of Sir Henry's illness Augustus Mordaunt arrived at Deane Hall; the domestics flocked around him, each conveying to his agonized ear more dismal tidings,—he spent a dreadful half hour alone in the library, without seeing either Selina or Mrs. Galton, as Mr. Temple was at that time administering the sacred rites of the church to Sir Henry, whilst they joined in prayer in the antechamber. When Sir Henry had finished his devotions, he asked for Selina, and his voice brought her in a moment to his bed-side; where, kneeling down, in a half suffocated voice, she implored his blessing, which never father

gave more fervently, nor amiable child received more piously.

"Selina! you have always been a good child, and obeyed me; when I am gone, mind what Mrs. Galton says to you. If I had followed her advice, I should have been better now." The baronet spoke with much difficulty, and, exhausted with the effort, closed his eyes in a temporary lethargy. Selina answered not, but with streaming eyes kissed his hand in token of obedience. At last, raising his head from his pillow, "Where is Augustus? he is a long time coming."—at that instant footsteps were heard slowly and softly traversing the anteroom. Selina opening the door admitted Augustus: she would have retired, but her father signed her approach; and recovering his strength a little, faltered out, "Happy to see you, my dear boy—I have been a father to you, Augustus, be a brother to this poor girl."

Augustus poured forth his feelings

with more fervency than prudence, and was stopped in the expression of them by Selina, who perceived her father was quite exhausted: he once more opened his eyes, saying, "I die content;" he struggled for utterance, but his words were unintelligible, and he could only articulate, "Go away,—Send Mrs. Galton." Augustus flew to bring her, whilst Selina hung in distraction over her dying parent: as they entered the room, her exclamation of "Oh! my father, my dear father!" gave them warning, that all was over; and when they approached the bed, parent and child were lying side by side, the one apparently as lifeless as the other.

Augustus, in his first distraction, thought he had lost Selina as well as his beloved and revered friend, but being recalled to his senses by Mrs. Galton, assisted her in removing Selina to another room. At length their exertions revived Selina to a dreadful consciousness of her

misfortune — how agonizing was that moment, when, in her frantic grief, she upbraided their kind care, and wished they had left her to die by her father's side! "I have no parent now." "Dearest child of my heart, have I not ever been a mother to you, and will you refuse to be still my daughter when I stand so much in need of consolation?" Selina threw herself into her aunt's arms, and gave vent, in tears, to the sorrow of her bursting heart; at length she cried herself to sleep, like a child, and her aunt remained at her side all night, ready to soften the horrors of her waking moments.

Selina, next day, being comparatively calm, was wisely left in perfect solitude to disburthen her heart: her grief was not insulted by officious condolence, too often resembling reproof rather than comfort. The aspect of grief is obnoxious to the comparatively happy, and they often use but unskilful endeavours to banish her from their sight,

more for their own ease, than for the relief of the unfortunate beings who are bound down to the earth by her oppressive power. Those who have felt it, will with caution obtrude themselves on her sacred privacy, and will know when to be mute in the presence of the mourner.

But where shall the reign of selfishness end?—Her votaries intermeddle with sorrows they cannot cure, and absent themselves from scenes where they might bestow comfort: they are to be found in the chamber of the mourner, but fly from the bed of death, which their presence might cheer, leaving an expiring relative to look in vain for a loved face, on which to rest the agonized eye. The friends of the dying do not fulfil their duty, if they desert the expiring sufferer whilst a spark of life remains. For who can say the moment when sense *begins* to cease? Though the eye is closed, and the tongue mute, the grateful heart may

yet be thankfully alive to the kind voice of affectionate care, or the last silent pressure of unutterable love!

Scenes of pain may be appalling to the delicate female. But should a wife, mother, daughter, or sister, shrink from any task, which may be useful to the object in which her *duty* and her love are centred? This is the courage, this the fortitude, it becomes woman to exert!

CHAPTER XVI.

Hark! at that death-betok'ning knell
Of yonder doleful passing bell.

GILBERT COWPER.

IMMEDIATELY after Sir Henry Seymour's death Mordaunt wrote to inform Mr. Seymour of the event, who was the nearest male relative to Sir Henry then alive, but who had not lived on terms of any intimacy with the Baronet, having chiefly resided on his own estate in Cumberland. He, however, lost no time in repairing to the Hall, less out of respect to the memory of his relation, than in hopes of benefiting by his decease. The day after his arrival was appointed for opening the will, but in it he was completely disappointed; it had evidently been written but a few days before Sir

Henry died; and, except small legacies to his servants, no bequest was made in it to any person but Mrs. Galton, Augustus, and Selina. To the first, Sir Henry gave a thousand pounds as a slight testimony of his friendship and esteem; to Augustus he left a small estate in Cumberland, and to Selina all his other property of every description, appointing Lady Eltondale sole guardian of her person; Mordaunt and Mr. Temple trustees to her estates till she married or came of age. The interest of a large sum in the funds was appropriated to her support till either of these events occurred; a considerable portion of which was to be paid to Lady Eltondale for her maintenance, as it was Sir Henry's wish that she should reside with her.

Mr. Seymour endeavoured to conceal his own disappointment by paying a variety of compliments to Selina and Augustus, whom he chose to class together, in a manner which, had either of them

been sufficiently disengaged to observe it, would have been not a little embarrassing to both: fortunately, however, they were each too much occupied by their own feelings to attend to him; and, as his only motive for visiting Deane Hall was now at an end, he was glad to escape from the house of mourning, with as little delay as possible.

Sir Henry's generosity, which was totally unexpected by Augustus, served but to imbitter his regrets for the loss of his benefactor. In him he had lost his earliest friend; for his uncle he considered as an entire stranger, and of his parents he retained no recollection. Whatever had been the errors of Sir Henry's judgment, his benevolence had never failed towards Mordaunt; and, while his many virtues had always ensured respect, his kindness had sunk deep in the grateful heart of Augustus, as, in their intercourse, essential obligation had never been cancelled by casual caprice, or rendered irk-

some by ungracious austerity of manner. He however carefully suppressed his own feelings, in order the better to administer consolation to those of Selina; and while Mrs. Galton and Mr. Temple, with affection almost paternal, used every argument which religion and reason could suggest, to reconcile her as much as possible to her loss; Augustus endeavoured by the tenderest care and unremitting attention to divert her thoughts from her recent calamity, and thereby gradually soften the poignancy of her sorrow. Selina had, till the moment when she was deprived of her father, been totally unacquainted with grief; for when her mother died, she was too young to be sensible of her loss; and Mrs. Galton's almost maternal kindness had filled the void of her infant heart, while she was yet scarcely conscious of its existence. At first she could hardly be persuaded that Sir Henry really breathed no more; so sudden, and to her so unexpected, was his dissolution. But, after

she had in some degree relieved her heart, by giving way to the first outrageous burst of sorrow, on being convinced he was indeed no longer in existence, she became almost stupified by the overpowering weight of her misfortune. Sometimes she would rouse herself from her torpor, by questioning herself, was what had passed but a dream, or an agonizing reality? Was it possible she should never more hear his beloved voice, or see the smile of parental fondness play round the cold lips, that were now closed for ever? Was she never again to feel the delight of cheering a parent's couch of sickness by the playful sallies of her imagination, or soothing the acuteness of pain by those considerate attentions affection only teaches us to pay. Alas! from whom could she now expect to hear the joyful sound of welcome, with which her return was always greeted, however short her absence might have been? or from whom could she now hope to meet the approv-

ing glance, that more than rewarded the merit it applauded; or experience that partiality, that accorded a ready extenuation of the errors it could not overlook? Whilst these reflections crowded on her mind, she felt as if the spring of all her actions was broken, and in the despondency of the moment, thought she would willingly have exchanged half the remaining years of her life to recal a few short moments of her past existence.

From these afflicting ideas she was however roused by receiving a letter from Lady Eltondale. It was couched in terms that were intended as kind, though the selfish feelings that dictated them were easily discernible. The viscountess drew the consolation she offered to the mourner, not from the source of religion, or that of friendship, but from the cold unfeeling calculations of interest. She congratulated Selina on her immense fortune, and on her speedy prospect of being emancipated from the cloistered

seclusion in which she had hitherto lived; and then, assuming the tone of guardian, left Selina no pretext for refusing her "orders" immediately to come to reside under her roof, though the *orders* were couched in the most polite terms of invitation. She concluded by asking Selina, whether Mrs. Galton meant to continue at the Hall, which was immediately understood by both as an intimation that she was not expected to accompany Selina; but the interdiction was rendered still more explicit by a postscript, that conveyed her Ladyship's compliments to Mrs. Galton, and her hopes, at a future time, to prevail on her to visit Eltondale.

Selina was indignant at this marked exclusion of her beloved aunt; and Mrs. Galton found some difficulty in prevailing on her to return even a polite answer to the Viscountess; but being persuaded from the tenor of her Ladyship's letter that excuses would be of no avail, she, at last, persuaded Miss Seymour to name

that day fortnight for leaving the Hall, in hopes, her promptitude in obeying the summons, would, in some degree, conceal the mortification it had occasioned. Mrs. Galton also wrote to say, that she herself would accompany Miss Seymour to Eltondale, as she could, on no account, think of resigning her charge, till she delivered her in safety to her new guardian; adding, that Mr. Mordaunt had promised to escort Mrs. Galton from thence to Bath, whither she purposed proceeding immediately. When Selina saw these letters absolutely dispatched, and found the time was decidedly fixed for her parting from the beloved scenes of her infancy, she gave way to an extravagance of grief, that resisted all Mrs. Galton's reasoning, and even Mordaunt's anxious entreaties, that she would not thus endanger her health. While Selina thus resigned herself to an excess of feeling, which was one of the most conspicuous traits of her character; and indulged, uncontrolled, a

sorrow that was too poignant to be permanent, Mrs. Galton was struggling against hers with that firmness, by which she was equally distinguished. She not only did not obtrude her misery on others, but her calmness, her mildness, her fortitude, proved she really practised her own precepts of resignation. However, her mental was superior to her bodily strength: and when she found she was suddenly to be separated, probably for life, from the child of her fondest affection; and recollected the pains, it was more than probable, her new guardian would take to eradicate from the too pliant mind of her young pupil, not only all the precepts she had so carefully instilled, but even all remembrance of the instructress; her spirits drooped under the painful anticipation: and her increased paleness, and declining appetite, betrayed the approach of disease, to which, notwithstanding, she was yet unwilling to yield. It was not, how-

ever, to be warded off, and, before the day appointed for Selina's departure, Mrs. Galton was confined to her bed in an alarming fever: for several days she continued in imminent danger, but at length the complaint took a favourable turn, and she was yet spared to the prayers of her anxious attendants. It was by no means an unfortunate circumstance for Selina, that Mrs. Galton's illness occurred, to divert her thoughts from the melancholy subject on which alone she had hitherto permitted them to dwell. By feeling she had yet much to lose, she imperceptibly became reconciled to the loss she had already sustained. And when Mrs. Galton was able to sit up in her dressing room, she, in some degree, resumed her natural character, once more contributing to the comfort of those she loved.

In this delightful task Mordaunt participated: when Mrs. Galton was able, he would sit for hours reading out to her

and Selina, while the grateful smile that lightened the expressive countenance of the latter sufficiently rewarded his toil. Sometimes, when Mrs. Galton reclined on the couch, he would draw his chair closer to Selina's work-table, and continue their conversation in that low tone, which belongs only to confidence or feeling, which, therefore he doubly prized; but, though he thus momentarily drank deeper of the draughts of love, no word escaped his lips to betray the secret struggles of his soul. It is true, that profiting by the name of brother, which their long intimacy, in some degree, entitled him to use, he hesitated not to pay her every attention the most assiduous lover could devise. But yet he scrupulously respected the engagement her father had made, and studiously endeavoured to conceal, even from its object, the passion that prayed upon his soul. Nor was Selina insensible to his kindness; on the contrary, she felt

it with her characteristic gratitude, and expressed her feelings with her usual ingenuousness; and such were the charms of Mordaunt's society, notwithstanding the sincerity and depth of her affliction for her father's death, the hours thus passed in the reciprocal interchange of kindness from those most loved were amongst the happiest of her life: and when, at length, Dr. Norton pronounced his patient sufficiently recovered to travel, the regrets at leaving the Hall were, probably, not a little increased on the minds both of Selina and Augustus, by the idea that such hours might possibly never again recur.

At last the day came, when Selina was to bid adieu to the only scene, with which happiness was as yet associated in her mind. It was a cold stormy morning in December. A mizzling rain darkened the atmosphere, and the leafless trees presented a scene of external desolation, that in some degree corresponded with the

mental gloom of the travellers. The sun was scarcely risen, and the domestics, that flitted about in the bleak twilight, all eager to offer some last attention to their beloved young mistress and her respected aunt, seemed by their mourning habits, and sorrowful countenances, to sympathize in their grief; whilst the mournful present was contrasted in every mind with the recollection of those joyous days of benevolent hospitality, that season of the year had formerly presented. Mrs. Galton, suppressing her own feelings, to soothe those of others, stopped to take a friendly leave of all, while poor Selina, overcome by their well meant commiseration, rushed past them, and threw herself into a corner of the carriage in an agony of grief.

When they reached the outer gate of the park, they found a few of her father's favourite tenants, and some of the cottagers on whom Selina had formerly bestowed her bounty, assembled to offer

their last token of respect and hearty wishes for her future happiness; but few of the number could articulate their simple, though honest, salutations. Unbidden tears trickled down their furrowed cheeks, as they thus parted with the last of their revered master's family. The old men stood in silence with their bare heads exposed to "the pelting of the pitiless storm," while their hearts gave the blessing their lips refused to utter. And the mothers held up their shivering infants to kiss their little hands as the carriage passed, in hopes their infantine gestures would explain the feelings they only could express by tears.

When they arrived opposite to the parsonage, they found its kind inhabitants equally anxious to bestow the parting benediction. Nor were their greetings as they drove through the village less numerous or sincere: most of the windows were crowded; and the few tradesmen Deane boasted were waiting

at their doors, to make their passing bow, whilst poor Mrs. Martin and Lucy continued waving their handkerchiefs over the white pales, till the carriage was out of sight.

THE TANJORE MAHARAJA SERFOGI'S SARASWATI MAHAL.

CHAPTER XVII.

Alquanto malagevole ed aspretta,
Per mezzo im bosco presero la via,
Che, oltra che sassosa fosse e stretta,
Quasi su dritta alla collina gia.
Ma poiche furo ascesi in su la belta
Usciro in spaziosa pratiera—
Dover il piu bel Palazzo e'l piu giocondo,
Vider che mai fosse vecluto al mondo *.

ORLANDO FURIOSO.

IN proportion as Mrs. Galton and Augustus approached Eltondale, their regrets increased from their anticipation

* No doubt most of my readers will prefer their own translations of my mottoes to any I could offer them; but for those who choose to avoid this trouble, I add my imitations, which claim no other

of so soon parting with Selina; whilst, on the contrary, her spirits seemed to rise with the varying scene. Almost every object was new to her, and, as such, was a fresh source of enjoyment. It would be impossible to describe Selina's astonishment when she entered Leeds. She had never before been in any large town; for though York was within thirty miles of the Hall, it had been, in point of intercourse, as much beyond Sir

---

merit than that of giving a general idea of the spirit of the original passage.

They through the wood their path descried,
Which climb'd the shaggy mountain's side;
Dark, narrow was the winding way,
O'er many a piercing stone it lay.
But when they left the forest's shade,
A spacious platform stood display'd,
On which a palace rose in sight,
The smiling scene of gay delight.

Henry's circle as London itself. The throng of people, the constant bustle of passengers, the gaiety of the shops, and above all the comfort, and even elegance of the hotel where they slept—were all to her subjects of agreeable surprise. Even the rapid motion of the carriage whirled on by the post horses, whose pace was so different from the sober gait of poor Sir Henry's antiquated steeds, animated and delighted her. And will the confession be forgiven?—such was her ignorance, or perhaps her frivolity, that she not only felt, but was vulgar enough to acknowledge a childish pleasure in the races the postillions frequently entered into with the stage coaches. Augustus was enchanted with the *naïveté* of her observations, and gazed with delight on her sparkling eyes and changing colour, which needed no interpreter to express her varying emotions. But Mrs. Galton sighed to think how that pliability of disposition, that

now rendered her so bewitching to others, might hereafter become dangerous to herself. Lady Eltondale, finding Mrs. Galton and Mordaunt were determined to accompany Selina to the end of her journey, had written a polite invitation to them to remain at her house some days; but they had both resolved not to avail themselves of this tardy civility, even for one night; however, unforeseen delays having occurred, they did not reach Eltondale till past nine o'clock in the evening. It was a dark stormy night; the wind, which blew in tremendous gusts, had extinguished the lamps of the carriage, and they with difficulty found their way through a thick wood, that climbed the side of a hill on which the house was situated; but when they emerged from this Cimmerian darkness, the superb mansion broke upon their view in an unbroken blaze of light. The exterior rivalled the elegance of an Italian villa from the lightness of its por-

ticoes, the regularity of its colonnades, and the symmetry of its whole proportion. Nor was the interior less elegant. Almost before the carriage reached the steps of the porch, the ready doors flew open, and a crowd of servants welcomed their approach: and such was the brilliancy of the scene into which they were thus suddenly introduced, that it was some minutes before the travellers could face the dazzling glare of this sudden day. When, however, they were enabled to look round, the *coup d'œil* called forth involuntary admiration. Three halls, *en suite*, lay open before them, all illuminated, particularly the centre one, which contained a light stone stair-case, that wound round a dome to the top of the house, only interrupted by galleries that corresponded to the different floors. Out of the hall in which they stood, a conservatory stretched its length of luxuriant sweetness. The roses, that were trained over its trellised arches, were in

full blow, and formed a beautiful contrast to the icicles that hung on the outside of the windows, whilst the blooming garden itself was equally contrasted by the winter clothing of the adjoining halls. In them large blazing fires gave both light and heat; whilst thick Turkey carpets, bearskin rugs, and cloth curtains to every door, bid defiance to the inclemency of the severest season.

Before Selina had time to express half her rapture and surprise, the Alcina of this enchanted palace approached to welcome them. And such was the elegance, the fascination of Lady Eltondale's address, particularly to Mrs. Galton and Augustus, that they for a moment almost doubted whether they had indeed rightly understood her prohibitory letter. Lord Eltondale had not yet left the dinner table; but the moment he heard of the arrival of his guests, he bustled out, napkin in hand, to bellow forth his boisterous welcome: "Gad, I'm glad to

see ye all. How do? how do? Why, Mrs. Galton, you're thinner than ever; but this is capital fattening ground. Selina, my girl, what have you done with the rosy cheeks you had last summer? Come, child, don't cry; you know you could not expect Sir Henry to live for ever—and you've plenty of cash, eh?" Lady Eltondale, perceiving her Lord's condolences by no means assuaged Selina's tears, took hold of her hand and that of Mrs. Galton, and with a kindness much more effectual, though perhaps not more sincere, led them away from her unconscious Lord, who, without waiting for reply or excuse, seized Mordaunt by the arm, and dragged him into the eating parlour, as he said, "to drink the ladies' health in a bottle of the best Burgundy he ever tasted."

The drawing-room, to which Lady Eltondale introduced her guests, was per-

fectly consistent with its beautiful entrance, for here,

> "If a poet
> Shone in description, he might show it,—
> Palladian walls—Venetian doors—
> Grotesco roofs—"

in short, all that taste and extravagance could procure to combine comfort and elegance.

Before Lady Eltondale drew aside the curtain that screened the door of the anteroom, a few chords on the harp were distinguished—and on entering the apartment they perceived two ladies. One was an old woman, dressed in mourning, with a large black bonnet, which almost entirely concealed her face, whom Lady Eltondale introduced as Lady Hammersley. She looked up, for a moment, from a book she appeared to be perusing intently, and after saluting the strangers with an obsequious inclination of the head, resumed

her studies in silence. The other lady, who was reclining against the harp, was dressed in the extreme of French fashion. Her face, though not youthful, appeared, at that distance, handsome, from the judicious arrangement of white and red, with which it was covered. But a closer inspection proved the only charms it could really boast were a pair of large black eyes, that could assume any requisite expression, and a set of teeth, which, whether natural or artificial, were certainly beautiful. Her dark hair was crowned with a wreath of roses *en corbeille*, the colour of her cheeks; and her tall slim figure was covered, not concealed, by a loose muslin robe *à la Diane.*

At first the Viscountess took no notice of the fair minstrel; but having placed Mrs. Galton close to the fire in a Roman chair, and ordered coffee, and an opera basket for her feet, she drew Selina's arm through her own, and, approaching the

stranger, addressed her, saying, "At last, Mademoiselle Omphalie, here is my niece: have I said too much of her?" "*Ah! mon Dieu, qu'elle est belle!*" returned the complaisant foreigner. "*Ma foi, elle est fait à peindre.** *Ma chère* young ladi, ve must be ver good friends: I am positive I shall dote a you." So saying, she held out her hand to Selina, who returned the proffered courtesy with a glow of gratitude for the unexpected kindness. But the Viscountess did not give her niece time to profit much by the stranger's civility. She just happened to recollect, that Selina's furs were unnecessary in her ladyship's drawing-room, and proposed to the travellers to have them introduced to their apartments, which they gladly acceded to. But here a new fashion struck their wondering eyes. The Viscountess desired her footmen to

* "Ah! how beautiful she is!" "She is divinely formed."

send "Argant" to show the rooms. Mrs. Galton and Selina ignorantly imagined they were to be consigned to the care of a house-maid. What then was their dismay, when a Swiss groom of the chambers made his appearance, with their wax tapers, and escorted them, not only to their rooms, which adjoined each other, but familiarly entered the apartments with them; and having deliberately lighted the candles on their respective toilets, with a thousand shrugs and grimaces asked, "*Si mesdames lui permettront l'honneur d'ôter leurs pelisses* * *?*" When he had at last retired, Mrs. Galton could no longer suppress her feelings; the tears trickled down her cheeks as she clasped Selina to her bosom, with a fearful anticipation of the trials and temptations, a scene so new and so bewitching was likely to offer to a girl so totally inex-

* "If the ladies would allow him to take off their pelisses."

perienced. But unwilling, unnecessarily, to damp the dear girl's spirits, which were already fluttering between joy and sorrow, she attributed her depression solely to the idea of so soon parting with her, as she had fixed to leave Eltondale with Augustus very early the following morning. When the two ladies returned to the drawing room, they found the gentlemen had joined the party. Besides Lord Eltondale and Mordaunt, the circle was enlarged by Sir Robert Hammersley, an old fat Scotch admiral, and his son, who had thrown himself, at full length, on a sofa, listening to an Italian *arietta*, that Mademoiselle Omphalie was warbling forth in " liquid sweetness long drawn out," whilst he occasionally interrupted her finest cadences with an audible yawn, or an almost unintelligible " *brava*." Lady Eltondale, Lady Hammersley, and Mrs. Galton formed a group together, and entered into general conversation, while Sir Robert and his host

were warmly engaged in continuing a political dispute. Selina remained attentively listening to the delightful harmony of Mademoiselle Omphalie's melodious voice, till at length her eye meeting that of Mordaunt, which rested solely on hers, her expressive countenance told him in a moment all her admiration and delight. He softly approached her, and, leaning over her chair, said, in a low tone, "All these new pleasures will soon make you forget - - - I mean you will scarcely have time to think of Yorkshire." She turned her beautiful face towards him, with an expression of melancholy and surprise, but meeting his speaking glance, she hastily withdrew her eyes, and coloured, with an ill defined feeling of painful pleasure: some flowers, that she had inconsiderately taken from a china vase, that stood on a table near her, suffered from her agitation, as she unconsciously scattered some of the myrtle

leaves on the floor. Augustus picked up one of the fallen branches, and, looking at Selina, "*Je ne change qu'en mourant*," said he, with an emphasis that seemed to apply the motto in more ways than to the leaf he held. Selina's confusion increased, and a tear stood on her long eye-lashes, but before she could articulate the half formed sentence that trembled on her lip, Lady Eltondale advanced to the table, and abruptly asked her to give her opinion of some drawings that were scattered about it; and so completely did she monopolize her for the remainder of the evening, that she had not again an opportunity of speaking to Augustus. When, however, the company were separating for the night, he advanced to ask if she had any further commands for him; but, with a trepidation she did not wait to analyse, she postponed her adieus, entreating him not

to say farewell then, as she meant certainly to be up long before Mrs. Galton and he would leave Eltondale in the morning.

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